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CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

ISSUE 12 1984/85

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

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SEASONAL GOOD WILL

Welcome to the CRASH CHRISTMAS SPECIAL! It's quite a special issue for us as well, because this is the twelfth issue and so marks a year of publishing. This somewhat expanded issue of CRASH is slightly unusual in that there are a few less reviews than normal, but that is made up for with the other odds and ends, especially the twelve competitions which I believe total up to over £7, 000 worth in prizes. There is also the 1985 Calendar, a 16 page full colour pull out with six months on either side, complete with two giant pictures by **Oliver Frey**. On top of that we have **Lloyd Mangram's Look Back**, a personal view of this year's software from the man who thinks he knows it all (I have to get my own back sometimes), **Derek Brewster** has produced a longer than usual article on the state of adventure software as part of the Adventure Trail and **Angus Ryall** has gone and got tipsy somewhere and picked another fight with an advertiser. As you can see, it's business as usual! As part of the extended Playing Tips, this month, **Robin Candy**, Ludlow's answer to P. Hacker, has been pressganged into doing a Pokes Corner, a bundle of cheats for the lazy arcade player. And if producing a calendar wan't enough, there's a double helping of the Terminal Man from **Oliver Frey**. Luny Jetman has a couple of pages to himnself too. And then there's the special article which explains how CRASH gets put together every month, which might give you an insight into why most magazine people are a little nutty at times; and there's a piece about what it was like for the BBC TV crew to film Imagine as the Liverpool software house headed towards its nervous breakdown. So I think there's plenty to keep you occupied gainfully over the long dark days of the Christmas holiday and we hope you enjoy the contents.

FREEDOM TO SPEAK

It wouldn't be quite right, season of goodwill notwithstanding, to have an editorial without some serious content, and on this, our twelfth issue I felt like saying something relating to the magazine's first year of existence. Being a totally independent outfit has meant having a lot more freedom to speak minds than is often possible in a publication owned and operated by a large corporation. In CRASH we have tried to offer writers the freedom to say what they want, and although this can sometimes lead to the risk of libel (for all sorts of odd things), responsible writers can make good use of it. There is a computer magazine (no names but it has a big letter) that claimed to be outspoken, irreverent and newsy – in fact just what young computer owners wanted. But being irreverent isn't what people really want, I suspect. You can be subversive in attitude, certainly light-hearted, but all these attitudes must be underlain with a core of seriousness, otherwise the comments made aren't worth the paper they are printed on. In other words, it's one thing to have fun and quite another to be redundant.

Any magazine that relies on advertising revenue for much of its monthly income is obvioulsy put in an invidious position when it comes to taking money from an advertiser who later discovers that his product has been heavily and negatively criticised. I have often had the impression that more pressure gets put on CRASH than on others along the lines of, ' no good review, no ad booking, ' and whilst one can't exactly blame an advertiser for the attitude, it seems odd that the same advertiser will still take space in other magazines when they either ignore his product or treat it just as we may have done, ie. say that the game is rubbish. Perhaps it underlines the fact that CRASH would seem to have become, as several people in the business have said, the trade buying guide for Spectrum software. Trade papers, on the whole, steer clear of making personal comment on product, their job being to help sell it. I'm not saying that we have felt too much of this (unfair?) pressure over the year, but it has been there.

On the other hand we have probably laid ourselves open to this pressure because software houses often ring to see if a game has been reviewed and how it did. If we know, we tend to tell them. My experience from the other side of the fence has been that if you try that with most other computer publications they will tell you that they cannot tell you anything because they are not allowed to. Their advertisement manager, however, is very likely (if he knows) to ring you up and offer you a select choice of bits of the review – naturally the bits that make the review sound like a happy one. The truth is, that the British software scene is really quite small, quite close knit, magazine personnel get to know their advertisers quite well, it can hurt to have to say to someone you know and like that their game is a load of rubbish. But without the freedom to say so, if it's true, a magazine like CRASH loses all credibility. The real answer is that software houses should just produce the very best. But that's utopian!

One thing I have noticed during this year, and am thankful for, is that if we slip up over a review in any way, you are all very quick to say so. At the end of the day, whether the accolade of being also a trade guide is true or not, CRASH is here for the buyers of software as well as for the producers of software.

On a slightly different aspect of the same subject, we are carrying an article this issue about Imagine and its demise, as seen (largely) through the eyes of the BBC film crew who worked with Imagine right up to the end. This is a touchy subject because much of what is known or has been said by people involved, is personal. Normally a publication is expected to take a very impartial view of anything on which it reports, and I hope what is written (by me in fact) is at least balanced. To be impartial in this case is not easy, because Imagine owed CRASH a lot of money at a time when we desperately needed it. There has been a suggestion by a person connected with the Imagine business that if we say anything he does not like that ➡

GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

we will be running the risk of a libel suit. It seems ironical that CRASH should lose a lot of money in what can only be seen as morally dubious circumstances and then risk losing more to the very people to whom we first lost it and who benefited in some small way by it. I mention all this because I don't want anyone to think that the article is written in any vengeful sense, becaue it isn't. And to those who have said to me that it all happened six months ago, why bring it up again, I can only reply that the story has not been fully told (Bruce Everiss has had a long piece published in *Your Computer*, but it's by no means the whole of it) and a function of CRASH is to inform on more than just the games. I don't claim that this is the entire story either – for that we will probably have to wait a long while, by which time we really may not care – but it certainly includes material that hasn't been mentioned before.

PSYTRAXX MAP

As a rather good illustration of what I was saying earlier in the piece above, we will be carrying a pretty extensive map of *Psytraxx* the game from **The Edge** in next month's issue. I say it's an illustration because The Edge did come in for a bit of sniping from our News Input pages a couple of months back and the review of the game itself, while not bad, was not over enthusiastic. Nevertheless, there are a lot of people out there playing it and getting hoplessly lost in the thousands of rooms while doing so. Showing there are no hard feelings over a few remarks, The Edge have given CRASH the exclusive right to print the map of *Psytraxx* which I hope will give a helping hand to the many stranded deep in the PCBs and chips!

Incidentally, we are looking forward to seeing the next release from The Edge, called *Brian Bloodaxe*. It's been described as an 'incredibly complex game' which features the hero battling his way through an unfriendly platform environment. There are 104 screens and a lot of clues and objects to be found along the way. Ultimately, the aim is to find the valuable hidden treasure, but everything possible happens to make this an extremely difficult task. We'll be reviewing *Brian Bloodaxe* next month, when it's business back to usual and Christmas out of the way!

Have a happy holiday, and enter every competition, the prizes are well worth it!

ROGER KEAN

ACG AMULET WINNERS





Oliver Frey presents the Ultimate ACG Amulet trophy to the winners of the Sabre Wulf Map Competition.

After admiring the large Ultimate trophy of the **ACG Amulet** for several weeks, which was sitting in the art department waiting for its winners, CRASH's David Western polished it up one last time ready to present it to **Steven Westland** and his two young assistants, **Ian Stathamand David Westland**. The three boys are from West Wickham in Kent, and travelled up with Steven's father (who is a policeman) to visit the CRASH offices in Ludlow on Friday 9th November.

Steven (aged 14) was responsible for the design and drawing of the *Sabre Wulf* map, while Ian (aged 13) did the character blow ups which adorned its key and wrote out the details, and David (aged 11) helped with the map design and did the colouring.

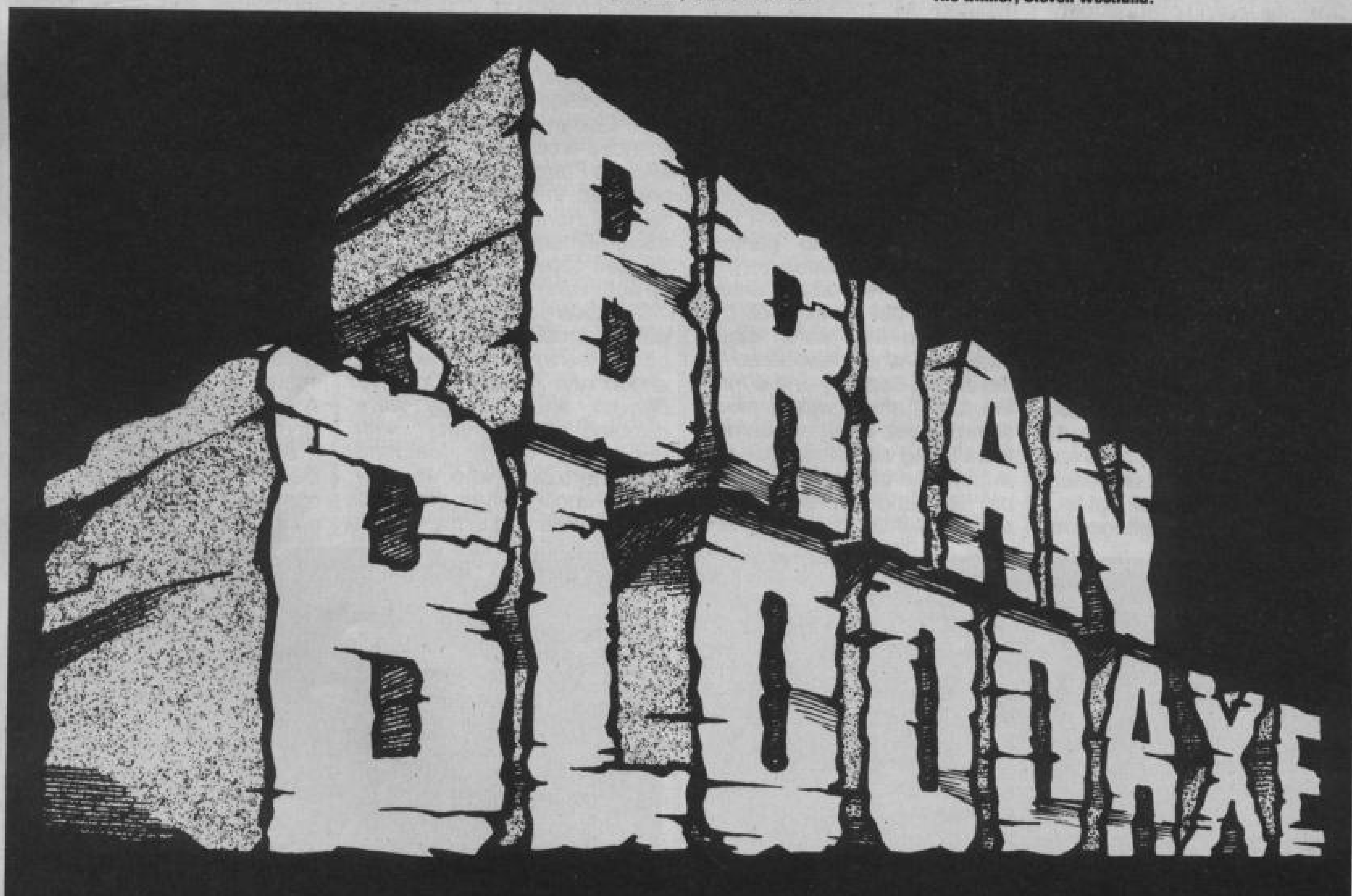
Theirs was also the biggest of the entries with the actual map measuring something in excess of 6 feet by 4 feet. Apart from being very large and very accurate, it was surprisingly delicate in colouring, as our colour picture in the November issue shows.

On arriving at Ludlow, the boys and Mr. Westland were taken to lunch by David Western and Franco Frey, after which the Ultimate ACG Tropy was presented by Oliver Frey who, for the occasion, took a few minutes off from producing calendar artwork! It was rather fitting that that very day the first copies of Ultimate's new game *Knight Lore* arrived. Now we await the flood of entries for *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore* in what promises to be Ultimate's most exciting competition yet, with loads of new Spectrums to be won as well as software and clothing *impedimenta*!

ADVERTISERS INDEX



Assistant, Ian Statham. Assistant, David Westland. The winner, Steven Westland.



Lloyd Mangram

LOOKS BACK

It seems amazing that a year has gone by since I was last handed the job of writing an article which looked at the happenings of a past year, for what was then an embryonic magazine with the peculiar name of CRASH. In looking back, I'm tempted to say 1984 was probably the year of CRASH, but I can't really concern myself entirely with this publication, as it's the software I'm supposed to deal with here! One thing I will say, is that it has been a hectic and eventful year for CRASH, with the magazine going from strength to strength, often threatening to outstrip the resources of the small team that puts it together, but it's been fun. Actually, I'm at a slight disadvantage, because my ever-ready CRASH Binder is missing issue one as someone nicked my copy before the binders came along, and then the issue sold out entirely! Anyway, here goes. . .

Spotting trends and commenting on them with hindsight, is the main forte of journalists, possibly because it gives us a feeling of superiority linked to a sense that 'we were not responsible'. On the other hand, trend-spotting is not only fun, it can also be truly informative. If I had to sum up 1984 very quickly I would point to the rise of the adventure, the death of the arcade shoot em up, the software slump, the dramatic improvement in software and programming, the rise of the TV/film/game link up and the mingling of arcade with adventure.

The year is going out, significantly, the way it came in. **Ultimate** gave us *Atic Atac* and pointed the way to arcade/adventures, a trend they have pursued relentlessly through a mere handful of four games to the excellence of *Knight Lore*. Ultimate have steadfastly refused to 'talk' to the computer press, never appear at shows, have avoided all software house link-ups that seem to have been the way of life through 84, and have released very little, but very select, product. Obviously the public love it.

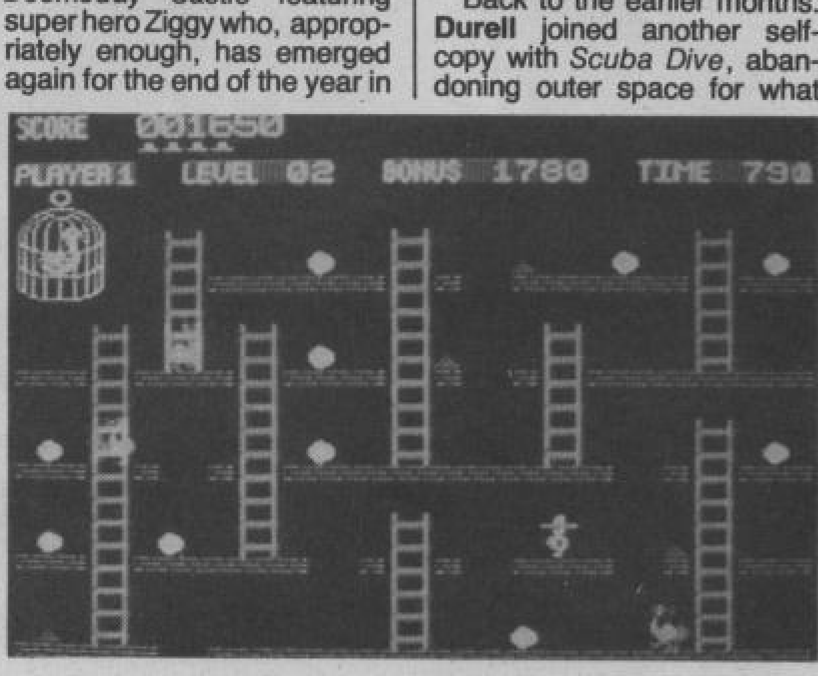
Atic Atac was pointing the way towards a new concept in arcade games, and suggested that arcade players didn't just want mindless zap games. Other software houses were to provide more such entertainment, but looking at the reviews in the March issue (many of which appeared at the end of January and during February), there wasn't much sign of it yet. **Imagine**seemed to be trying with *Alchemist*, but in truth the game was a lot of hot air and *Stonkers* kept crashing, though it did prove that a better looking wargame was a distinct possibility. Throughout 84, an obvious trend from 83 is apparent. In 83 everyone was copying arcade originals, in 84 they started copying each other, or is it just synchronicity at work. The March issue carried reviews for **Ocean**'s *Hunchback*(a licenced arcade copy) and **Mr. Micro**'s *Punchy*. Generally we preferred the latter, although sales of *Hunchbcak* indicated disagreement there. I'll call this the 'self-copy' trend, as it crops up again and again.

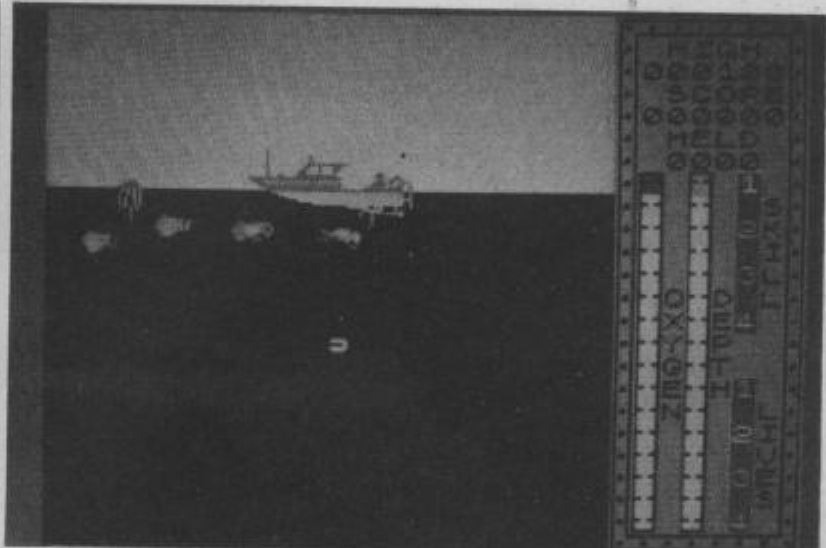
If arcade copies were on the wane, arcade high scoring games were not. **A&F** had their enduringly popular *Chuckie Egg*out, and **Fantasy** were climbing the charts with *Doomsday Castle* featuring super hero Ziggy who, appropriately enough, has emerged again for the end of the year in *Backpackers Guide to the Universe*. *Chuckie Egg*has gone into tha annals of history along with *Lunar Jetman* as one of the ace hi-score games. **Bug-Byte**modestly released *Birds and the Bees* on which Matthew Smith had worked and followed it up with the much better *Antics* on which Matthew Smith did not work. But Matthew's name was on everyone's lips with the news that *Manic Miner* follow up *Jet Set Willy* was imminent. It wasn't though. Two outstanding programs also appeared then, *Fighter Pilot* from **Digital Integration** and *Wheelie*from **Microsphere**. The former showed just how far the Spectrum could go (it's gone further still) and how exciting a simulation could be, the latter was just a damned good, original game with super graphics. Add to this the smart 3D graphics of *Android 2* by **Vortex**, and at times Space Invaders never looked further away. Not so, however, 84 has produced some real crock games too.

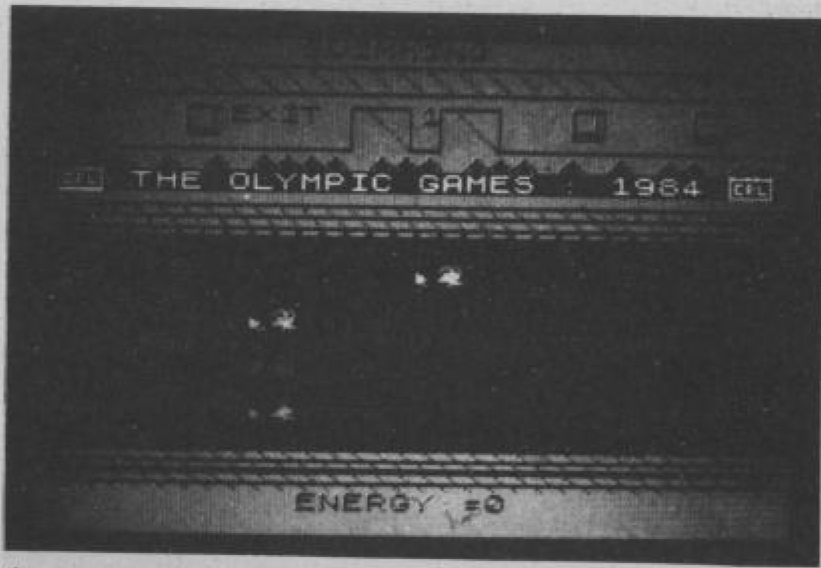
Quite a few crocks appeared in a self-copy battle to be the first with a real 'Pole Position' game. Ones that come to mind are *Grand Prix Driver*, **Britannia**, a bit unplayable but novel graphics; *Speed Duel*, **DK'Tronics**, completely unplayable and rather boring graphics; **Psion**'s excellent *Chequered Flag*, which differed from the others by being more of a simulation; there was the scandal over rip offs from **Spirit Software** and their steering wheel version called *Formula One*, which when it finally turned up was a very damp squib indeed; **Activision** recently had a go with the novel *Enduro*; the best was probably **Micromega**'s great *Full Throttle*; and last, not entirely least, the one that spawned the whole thing, **Atarisoft** have managed to limp out with *Pole Position*.

Back to the earlier months. **Durell** joined another self-copy with *Scuba Dive*, abandoning outer space for what









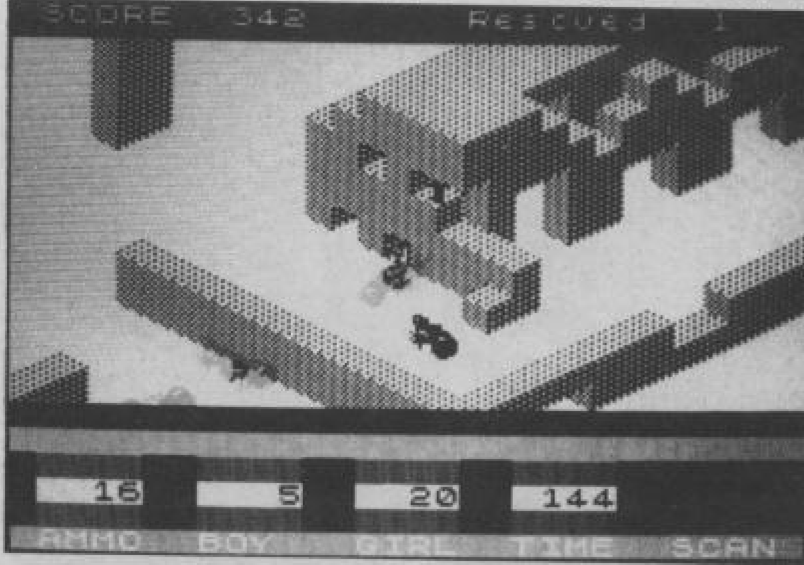
scientists like to call inner space. The underwater theme was also picked up by **Bug-Byte** in *Aquarius*, which wasn't so good, by **Richard Shepherd** in the awful *Devils of the Deep* and later by **C. R. L.** in their lightweight but fun *Glug-Glug*. Of all, *Scuba Dive*was the best and most playable.

Moving on a month, the crop of the crocks was improving as the Christmas 83 boom receded into the slough of despond. **C. R. L.** offerd two completely pathetic games, *Caveman* and *Lunar Lander*. Music publisher **K-Tel** graced us with abominations called 'double-siders' and proved that music for pleasure is one thing but MFP also stands for More Failed Programs. It's a sign of the times that K-Tel took stock during the year, gave themselves a new marketing image in **Front Runner** and have just released the excellent *Boulder Dash*, which is so good it absolves them of their earlier horrors. March and April was also the time when that other publisher of music **Virgin**, who like K-Tel had never found a game worthy of the name, brought out *Dr. Franky* and showed there was hope for them. They too have improved their position enormously, releasing the odd but good *Strangeloop* a couple of months back.

Digital Integration proved that *Fighter Pilot*wasn't a flash in the pan by releasing *Night Gunner*, more a game than a simulation, and **Artic** pulled themselves together on the arcade front with *Bear Bovver*. The uneven **R&R** started another self-copy theme in helicopters with *Chopper X-1*, a rather second rate game which paved the way for **Richard Wilcox** and *Blue Thunder*. Loath to leave a flying idea, the altered Wilcox as **Elite** is about to release *Airwolf* based on the current telly series. Just recently **Durell** have continued the theme with their excellent simulation/strategy game *Combat Lynx*, and somewhat belated, we still await **Digital Integration**'s game based on a helicopter.

Going onto the May issue we were treated to a real mix of good and bad. Ignoring the bad, April/May saw the release of some excellent programs, among them Derek Brewster's amazing *Code Name Mat* released by **Micromega**. 84 could well be called the Year of Micromega, having started off well with the 3D *Deathchase*, *CNM* added to their lustre, *Full Throttle* polished it to a shine and the last three releases *Braxx Bluff*, *Kentilla* and *Jasper* have shown a willingness to go for the unusual and the best. **Hewson Consultants** also went from strength to strength, releasing the third in Steve Turner's Seiddab trilogy, *3D Lunattack*. The experience gained with these games finally led to Steve turning in the advanced 3D adventure *Legend of Avaion*.

We had been treated to a special preview of **Software Projects**' monster release *Jet Set Willy* and took screen shots of it which later caused much confusion because they didn't match with the actually



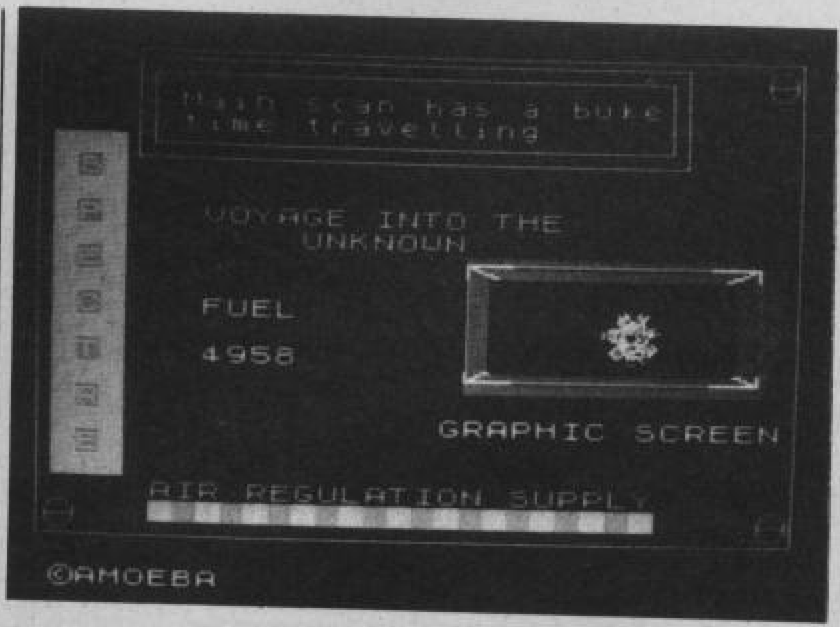
released game. One writer even accused us of faking as the preview shots showed screens all with capital letters for the under titles on some and a mixture of capitals and lower case on others, Matthew Smith would never do this we were told. But he did. There's no doubt that the release of *JSW* was the biggest event for ages. It wasn't long, however, before the ace hackers started complaining –something was wrong with the program, and so it seemed. But the Attic bug doesn't seem to have put anyone seriously off enjoying the most torn apart game in history. You could almost say that *Jet Set Willy* was poked to death.

It was also the month that a new company called **Gargoyle Games** delighted us with an old fashioned shoot em up with modern 3D graphics called *Ad Astra*. We were all rather pleased with ourselves at CRASH because we were the first to spot the game and push it. Our faith has not been misplaced as Gargoyle's latest mammoth graphic adventure *Tir Na Nog*proves.

Insignificant at the time, was a game called *Space Station Zebra*, which we didn't think much of, from another new





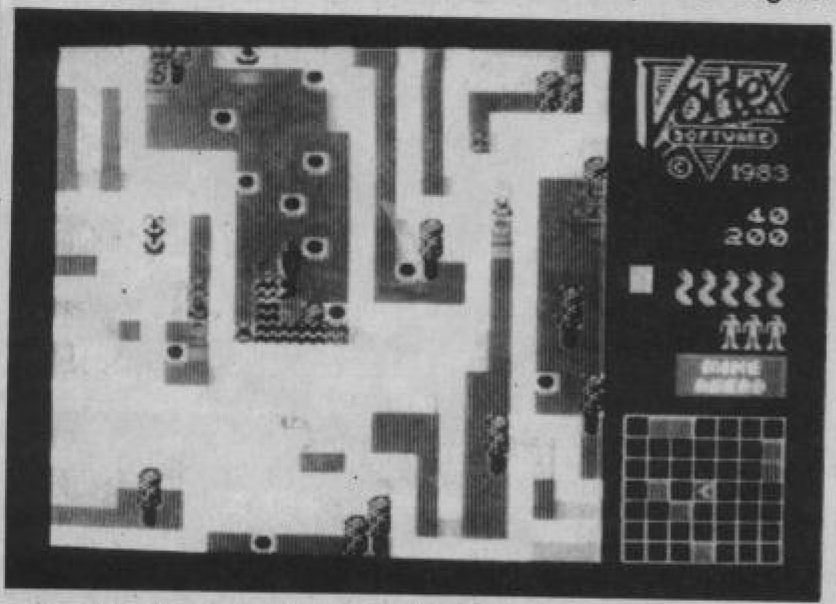


comapny calling themselves **Beyond Software**. Little were we to know (as they say in good adventure stories. . .)

After a long pause **Imagine** threw out the disappointing *Pedro* and prepared to nose dive into bankruptcy. Summer was approaching.

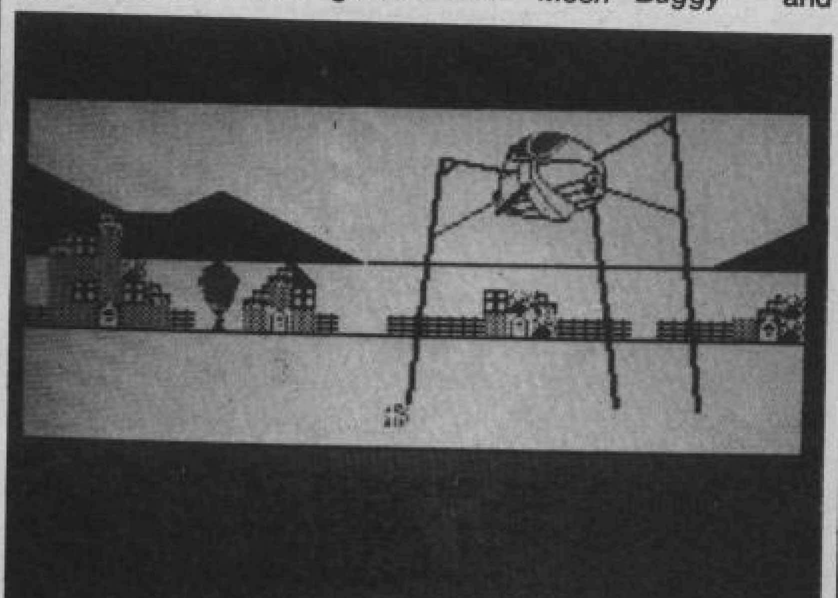
which has led many into argument over its merits. We liked it a lot. At the launch in London, we also got to see a glimpse of a new type of adventure/strategy wargame called *Lords of Midnight*.

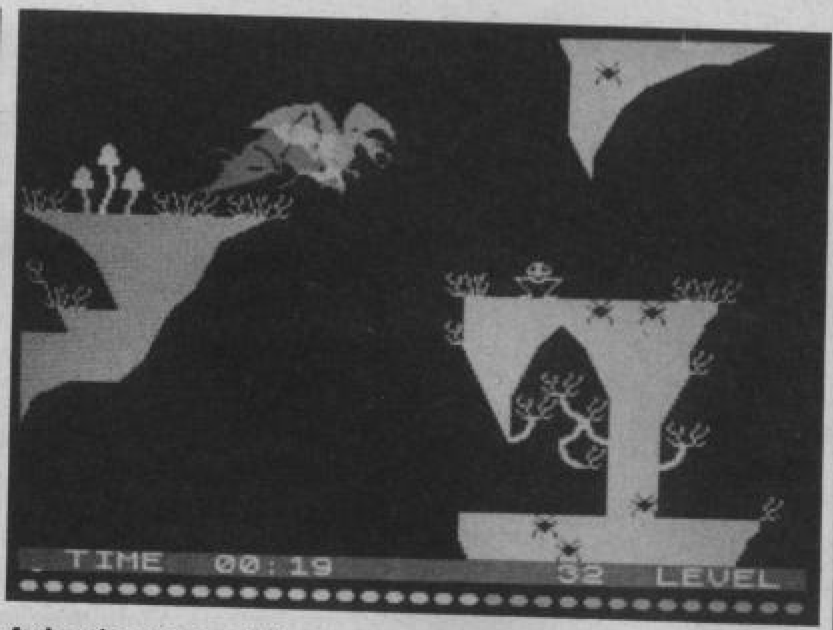
June/July brough the summer slump into brighter



The June issue looked a bit thin on good games, the crocks predominating. **Hewson's** *Fantasia Diamond* gave adventurers a lot to think about, as did the second in **Incentive's** *Ket Trilogy – Temple of Vran*. Otherwise the only bright light really was **Beyond's** *Psytron*, a game

focus -hardly anything to report, but wait! **Ultimate** to the rescue! *Sabre Wulf* caused controversy over the almost doubling in price, but few argued with the game's graphics. We liked **Ocean**'s *Moon Alert*, also a subject of a self-copy theme, with the **Visions** *Moon Buggy* and





Anirog's game of the same name all out. **Rabbit** had also promised a Spectrum version of their C64 hit on the theme called *Troopa Truck*, but the comapny's demise quashed that.

Sinclair gave us a sudden spate of releases, mostly average to mediocre with the exception of the excellent *Stop the Express*, and **Imagine** continued down the slippery slope with the excrable *Cosmic Cruiser*. **Melbourne House**, now very late with the long-awaited *Sherlock*, diverted our attention from their problems with Philip Mitchell's graphic entertainment *Mugsy*, while **Silversoft**, very quiet of late, slipped out with the highly original *Wosre Things Happen at Sea*.

July/August saw the release and instant pedestal placing of **Beyond**'s *Lords of Midnight*. One software house who always seemed to have just missed was **Mikro-Gen**, but with the creation of Wally Week in *Automania*, they changed all that, managing to follow it up with the more recent and better still *Pyjamarama*. Other high spots were *Rapscallion* from **Bug-Byte** and *TLL* from **Vortex**, both boasting strikingly different graphics. **Micromania**

made a bid for the hi-score stakes with *Kosmic Kanga*, and the month saw another brand new software house emerge with the capacity for fine programming –**Realtime** with their definitive 'Battle Zone' type game *3D Tank Duel*. Once again the CRASH team felt they were helping to create a software house, by pushing something they believed in, and once again the faith was not misplaced as Realtime worked on their latest release, *Starstrike*, now out.

July/August proved to be about as dead as it could get, with only a furious shoot em up from **Creative Sparks** to enliven proceedings. *Black Hawk* was curiously old fashioned, but fun to play. For adventurers the long-awaited release of *The Hulk* proved that graphics make adventures look good, but that more is sometimes required to make them good to play. **C. R. L.** take the credit for being the first software house out with the self-copy theme of the year – the Olympics. Their aptly named *Olympics* had been a gross disappointment, and **Automata**'s *Olympimania* was a the usual load of anarchic fun, but **Database**, publishers of Micro User, were the first with a serious treatment in *Micro Olympics*.





HE'S HERE! HE'S MADE IT!

Son of Blagger for 48K Spectrum

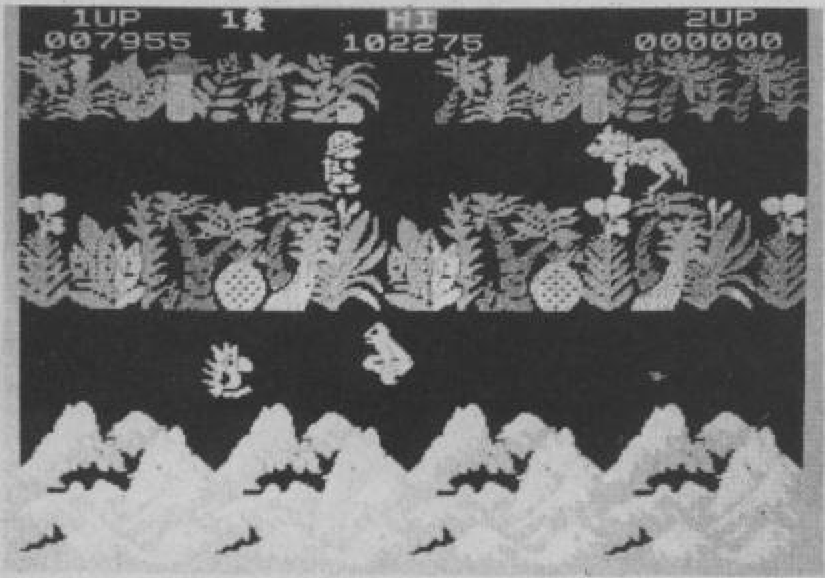
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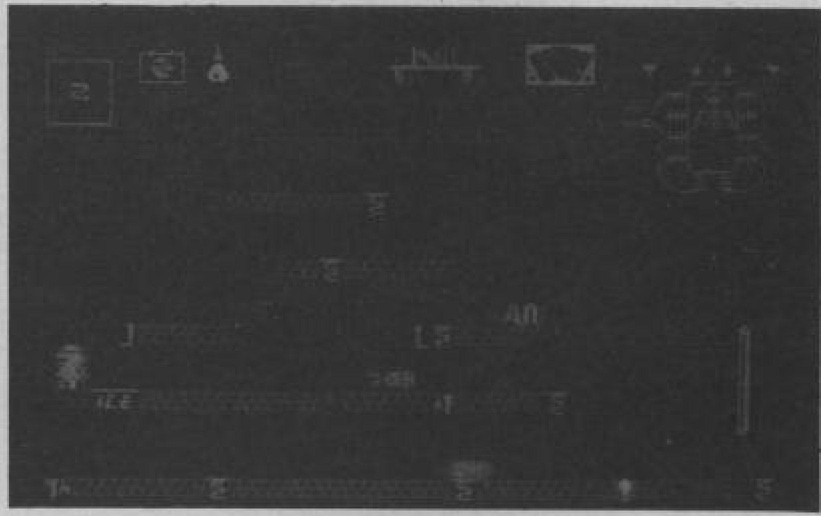
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Software Limited





Buffer also did a program, and **Melbourne House** have continued the theme with *Sports Hero* as have **Hill MacGibbon** with *Run for Gold* (reviewed in the next issue), but the best liked is from **Ocean** with *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*.

Just to prove that although Spectrum games seemed to be improving in technique all the while a real crock could get through, **Mastertronic** got their adventure for all time reviewed after a reader wrote in saying we hadn't done it, and why not as it was fab. *Voyage into the Unknown* got, I think, the lowest rating ever from CRASH at that time. It was only beaten by **Elephant**'s stupendously bad *Kosmik Pirate*.

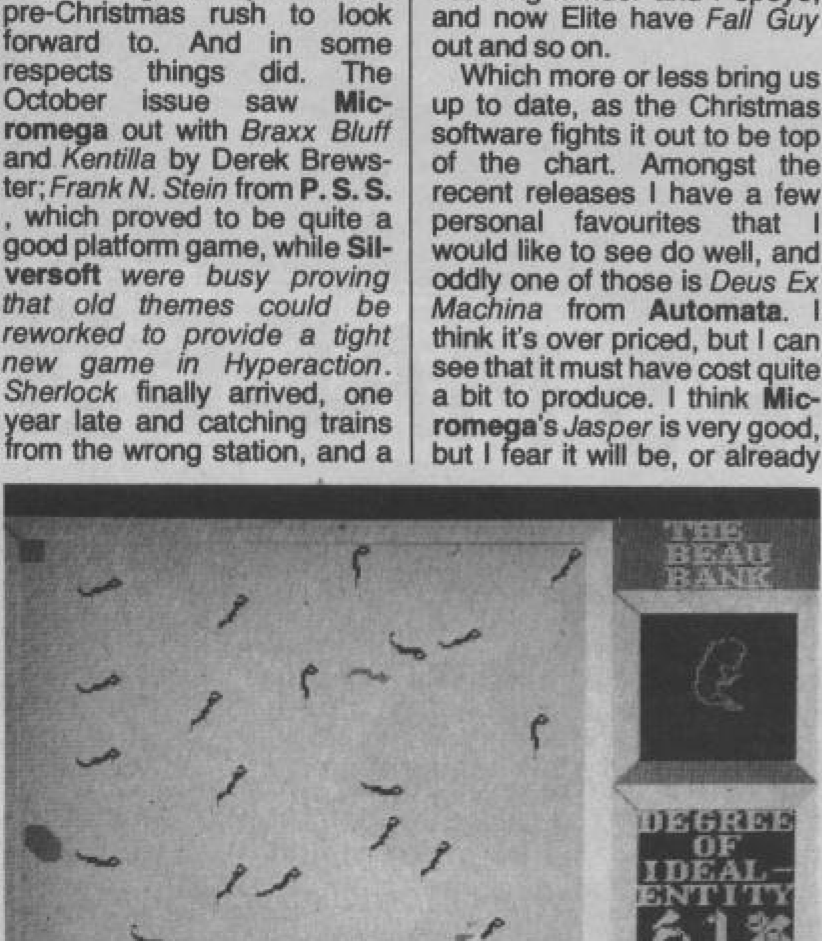
With September/October, things looked as though they should brighten up with the pre-Christmas rush to look forward to. And in some respects things did. The October issue saw **Micromega** out with *Braxx Bluff* and *Kentilla* by Derek Brewster; *Frank N. Stein* from **P. S. S.**, which proved to be quite a good platform game, while **Silversoft** *were busy proving that old themes could be reworked to provide a tight new game in Hyperaction*. *Sherlock* finally arrived, one year late and catching trains from the wrong station, and a new company called **Gremlin Graphics** introduced us to the dusty wanderings of *Monty Mole*, possibly the first game to really look like it could steal the laurels from the as much maligned as hacked and played *Jet Set Willy*. **C. R. L.** started the trend of producing the game of the film by releasing the slightly disappointing *Terrahawks*, which was neverthless a better experiment than their game of the music version of *War of the Worlds*. The competition for securing licences from Hollywood and Shepherds Bush is hotting up with Ocean and Elite fighting over Airwolf (Elite won this one), C. R. L. releasing the game of megahit *Magic Roundabout*, **Activision** scooping on the super hit film *Ghostbusters*, **DK'Tronics** securing Minder and Popeye, and now Elite have *Fall Guy* out and so on.

Which more or less bring us up to date, as the Christmas software fights it out to be top of the chart. Amongst the recent releases I have a few personal favourites that I would like to see do well, and oddly one of those is *Deus Ex Machina* from **Automata**. I think it's over priced, but I can see that it must have cost quite a bit to produce. I think **Micromega**'s *Jasper* is very good, but I fear it will be, or already has been, overshadowed by games like *Jet Set Willy* and *Monty Mole*. It's different in many respects, however, and deserves to do well. Another favourite is the remarkable *Skool Daze* from **Microsphere**, which I like because it is realistic, anarchistic, and puts school where it belongs – in perspective. Most of my other current faves have already been mentioned in passing.

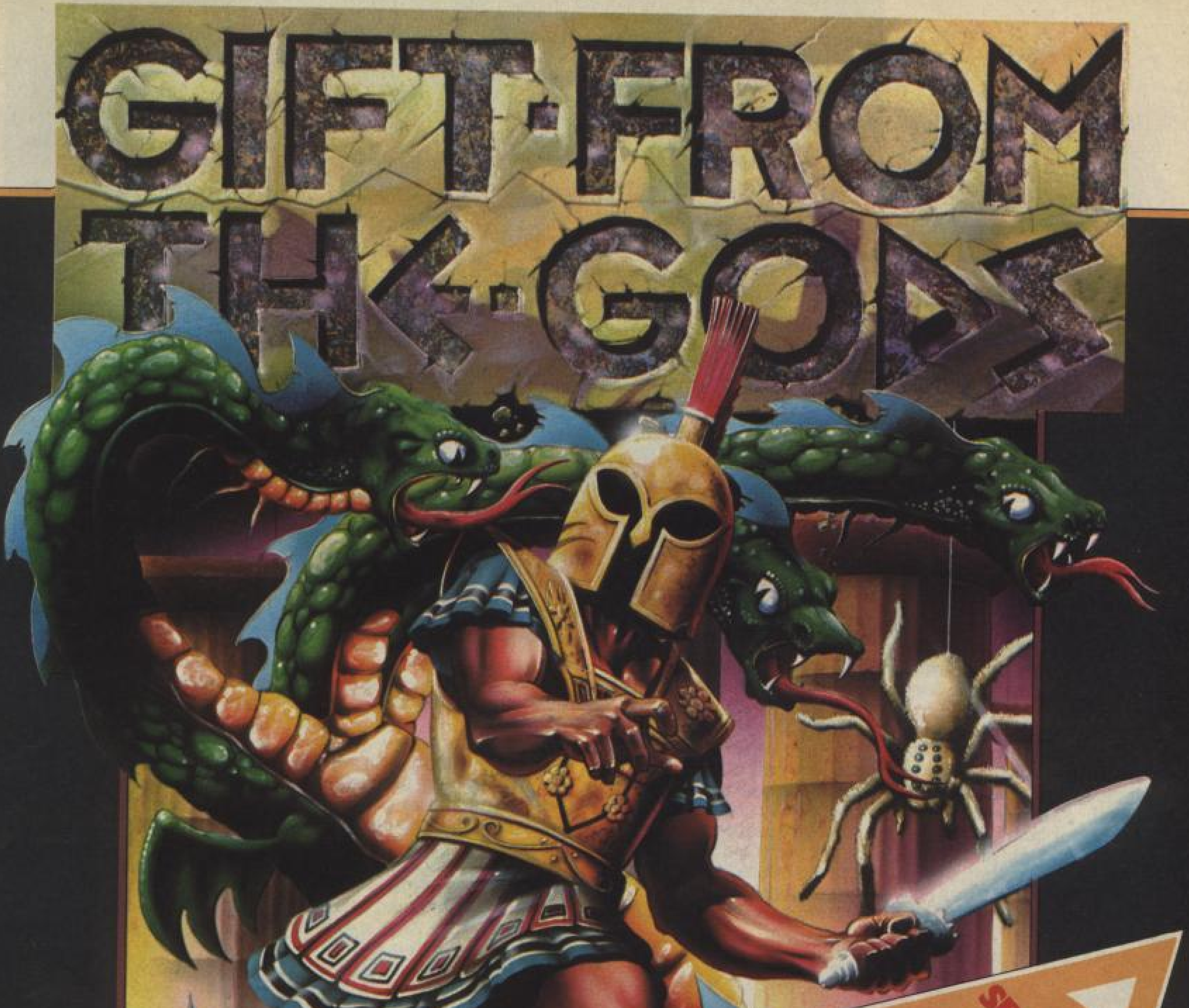
Company trends over this year have been all over the place. We have witnessed the disappearance of Imagine, Rabbit and Carnell to name some of the bigger ones. Rabbit, like Imagine, seemed in retrospect to survive more on hype than product, although Rabbit's hype was aimed more at the trade than the public, which was their huge mistake – they just couldn't see that no one wanted the rubbish they produced for most of the time. We have also seen big business move in with names like Thorn EMI (Creative Sparks) who, like Virgin and K-Tel made a reassessment of what they were doing earlier this year. Now Busby has a rival in British Telecom's **Firebird**; the overweight and sluggish Atari have tried hard to break in with over-priced versions of their arcade originals, but it all seems to be a case of too little too late.

A software house from the earliest days who went quiet during the year is **Quicksilva**. Their *Fred* and *Snowman* made some impact but not as much as the earlier *Ant Attack* or *Bugaboo*. Concentrating rather more on conversions of the C64, they were bought out by Argus Press in the middle of the year, and I can't help wondering whether the loss of independence to a corporate giant won't lead to a greater sense of apathy. I hope not. The *Ant Attack* follow up from Sandy White, *Zombie Zombie* was, I thought, a bit of a disappointment.

One of the biggest successes has to be **Ocean** who started out as **Spectrum Software**, but through clever marketing policies, linking themselves to a distributor, buying in American software for conversion and careful control of product, have made themselves the true successors to the image Imagine tried to create. As if to seal that image, Ocean recently acquired the Imagine title. But what has also been most encouraging is that throughout 84, new and often small software houses have emerged, fighting hard and with often excellent product. They still form the backbone of this business and help make it all worthwhile.







GIFT FROM THE GODS

"The Power of Destiny"

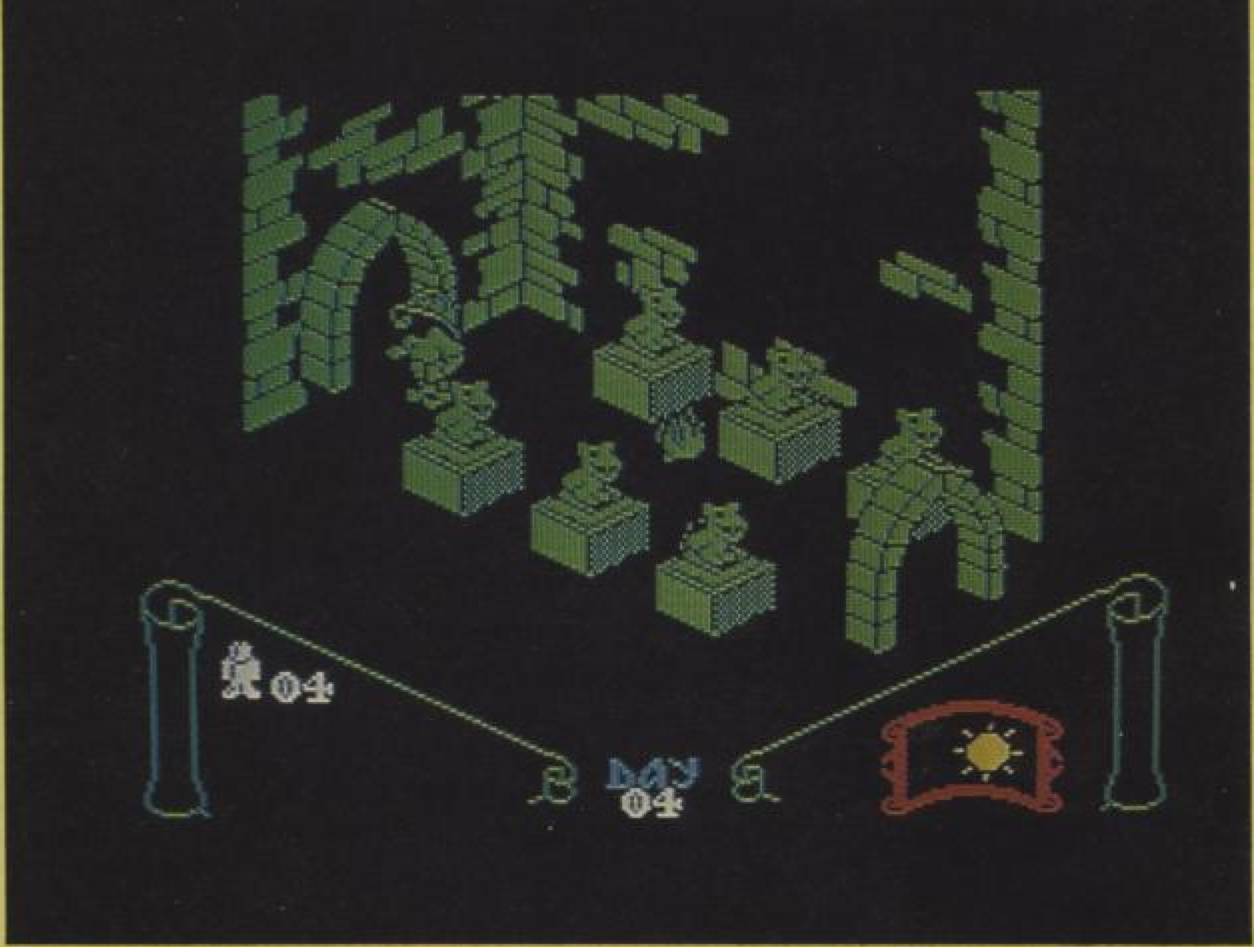
- Number 1 Blockbuster from the "**MEGA TEAM**".
- Spectacular arcade – adventure played in a multitude of ways and at many different levels.
- Watch the Secrets of the Labyrinth unfold as our Hero, ORESTES, tests his skill against the power of GOD and MAN.
- Stunning animated graphics take you beyond time . . . into the "**FIFTH DIMENSION**".
- "**INTELLIGENT**" controls allow ORESTES to perform an astonishing repertoire of feats from the command of joystick or keyboard.
- Discover the key to "**AGAMEMNON'S** puzzle, through the power of Intrigue and Illusion!

Ocean Software is available from selected branches of: **WOOLWORTH**, WHSMITH, Boots, John Menzies, LASKYS, Rumbelows, ***COMET***, Spectrum Shops and all good software dealers. Trade enquiries welcome.

A Crash Smash!

KNIGHT LORE

Producer: **Ultimate**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **The ACG Team**



Daytime Human explorer . . .

It must be Christmas! You can tell by the fact that Ultimate has released two games simultaneously. *Underwurlde* is the follow up to *Sabre Wulf* and *Knight Lore* is the follow up to *Underwurlde*. `Ultimate have been clever enough to ensure that both new releases are very different from each other in playing style and game design. Whereas *Atic Atac*, *Sabre Wulf* and *Underwurlde* all played with 3D *Knight Lore* uses a very solid 3D perspective in which the 3D plays an important part spatially.

Our brave hero, Sabreman, is back again, pith helmet still firmly in place, but now roving the torturous rooms and passageways of Knight Lore castle to seek the the old dying wizard, who is the only person who can free him from the deadly curse (appearing in a pith helmet all day perhaps)? The old wizard, whose name is Melkhior, is like many another game wizard – he sets traps and tests to ensure that all who reach hi are worthy.

Knight Lore is played over forty days and forty nights. At the base of the screen a moon and sun symbol indicate the time. By day Sabreman is himself, but at night he changes into a werewulf. In either condition he is vulnerable to sudden death. The rooms are populated with all manner of spiky death and large stone blocks. In some respects *Knight Lore* resembles a 3D platform game, where the trick in each room is to discover the route and the methods by which you can reach the various charms which must be collected without being impaled on a spike, crushed by a falling ball chain or zapped by a poltergeist. Sometimes the ghosties are useful in helping you to move about, but panic sets in as the days run out, for after the fortieth day, Sabreman, if he fails in his quest, will forever become a werewulf.

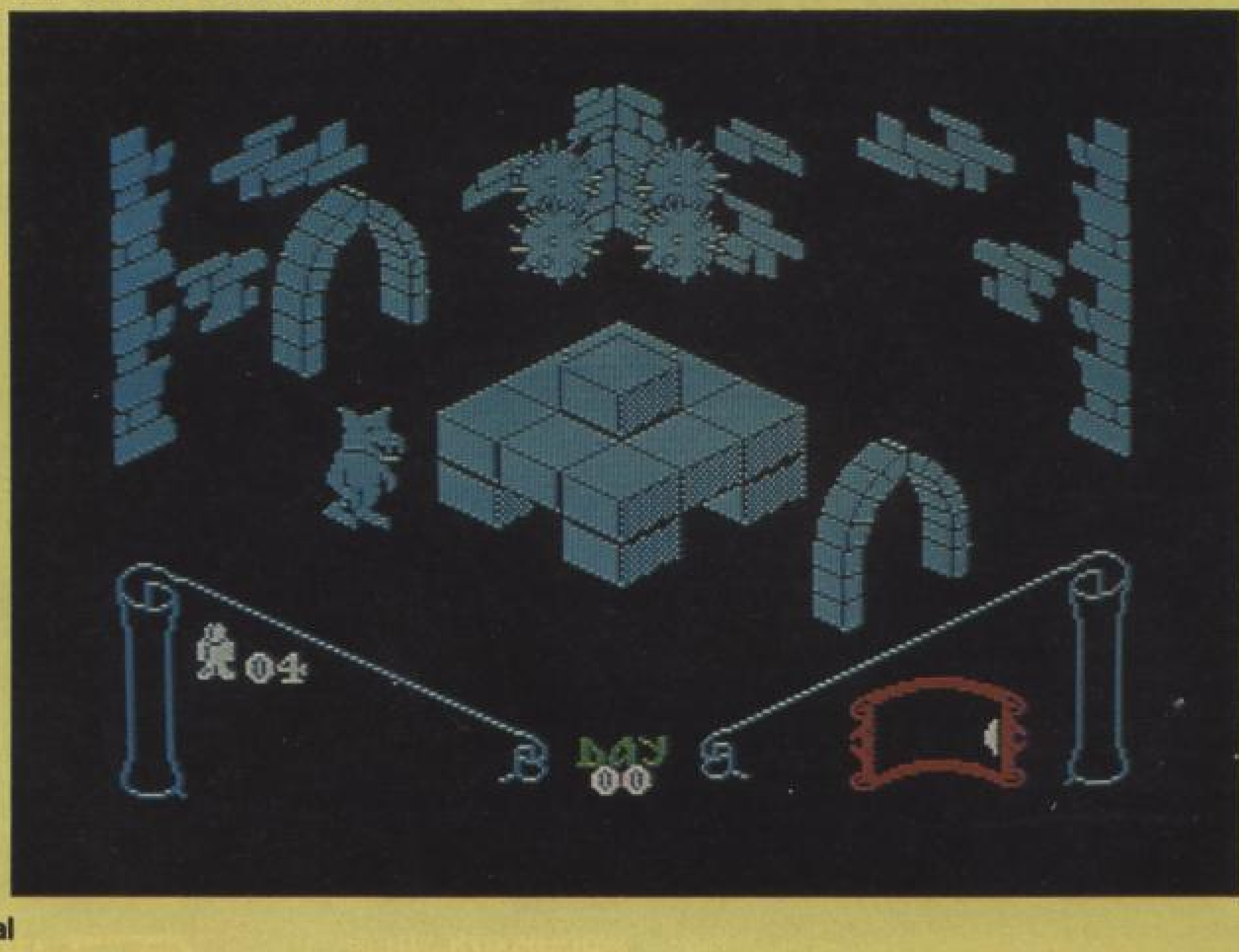
Scoring is by time taken, percentage of quest completed and charms collected with an overall rating offered. As in *Underwurlde* there is no Hall of Fame, largely due to the size of the program.

CRITICISM

● 'Sabreman is back, but this time he's back in glorious 3D. *Knight Lore* is similar in appearance to *Avalon*, but the graphics are bolder. With that said *Knight Lore* resembles nothing I've played before. It is fun, addictive, but to sum up in one word it's Brilliant! From what I can gather from the rhyming instructions you've got to put together a potion to stop yourself from turning into a werewulf – and one of the excellent touches in the game is the transformation from man to beast and back again. After a while I think I preferred the werewulf. The people at Ultimate obviously have devious minds because you only have to look at some of the rooms to see how wicked they are. On the whole I found *Knight Lore* slightly more pleasing than *Underwurlde* for two reasons; it's slightly easier and it's not as frustrating. Once again Ultimate have come up with the goods, *Knight Lore* is sheer perfection, get this for Christmas – you definitely won't regret it. '

● *'It's nice to see Ultimate depart from the Sabreman theme in* KnightLore*. This game is totally different and original from anything they've done before – in my opinion it's the best game they have yet produced. Grphics are in 3D and use the new technique of masking, so that the moving characters do not flicker at all when they pass in front of*

. . . turns night prowling Werewulf



K·N·I·G·H·T L·O·R·E

other objects, and only one colour is used per screen which avoids any attribute problems. This does not mean that the game is lacking in colour however, since each screen has its own colour. Some of the graphics are distinctly original, quite different to anything produced on the Spectrum before. The graphics are so detailed, imaginative, large and well drawn, it is impossible to complain about them. There is just such a lot to see and to explore, it's incredible and a joy to play. This game is full of mystery in the sense of why do you turn into a werewulf at night!? What do any of the objects do, is a question I keep asking myself – just fun collecting them. Good use of sound has been made with some nice tunes. To sum this game up I do think that this is probably the best game yet produced for the Spectrum and it seems to me to be perfect in every sense. I honestly can't see how any real improvement canbe made on this– well worth the £10.'

● 'Any Ultimate game is a thrill to unpack and load, but with *Knight Lore* they have surpassed themselves. The 3D graphics are so exciting to see that the fingers are instantly itching to get at the keys. A novel innovation here is the option to select what is called directional cotrol as well as the keys or joystick functions. This adds eight directional movement to Sabreman, which is very useful in the tight confines of the 3D screen. The 3D itself is excellent, with marvellous drawing of the walls and characters, and Ultimate have used the hidden view idea very cruelly, so that a hint may be given of something nasty crouching behind a stairway – but you're never sure until it's too late. The most has been wrung from the situation, for example, blocks may move on their own, sometimes they are carried by ghosts, sometimes they sink when you land on them, sometimes they vanish to reveal deadly spikes beneath. The animation is terrific from the smallest detail right through to Sabrewulfman himself. *Knight Lore* has that magical ingredient which makes it exciting to play and watch, and keeps you on the edge of your seat with anxiety. IT'S SIMPLY A GREAT GAME.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: alternate keys on the bottom row for left/right, any keys on the second row for forward, any key on the third row for jump, any key on the top row for pick up/drop
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: very responsive, plenty of options for simple control
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: excellent 3D, marvellous design and imagination
Sound: terrific
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 4
Screens: not known, but loads
Special features: filmation, which allows you to do almost anything with the objects in the game
General rating: an outstanding game at the price.

Use of computer	93%
Graphics	97%
Playability	97%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	96%
Value for money	93%
Overall	94%

A Crash Smash

U·N·D·E·R·W·U·R·L·D·E

UNDER–WURLDE

Producer: **Ultimate**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **The ACG Team**



Swinging in the Underwurlde

Ultimate have an uncanny knack of releasing games just too late to be able to do them justice in a review because the issue is usually on its way to 'bed'. But with *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore* they were late enough that they missed the last issue altogether and thus gave enough time for this one! As is well known by Sabre Wulfers, *Underwurlde* is the second 'Sabreman' game, but arguments that *Sabre Wulf* was *Atic Atac* with greenery, hold little water with the new game. The perspective is different for a start – you view the game from the audiences' view of a stage (which makes mapping rather harder!), although all the locations do logically connect to make a massive maz, seemingly bigger even than the one in *Sabre Wulf*. But one of the principal changes, and the first time that Ultimate have employed the device, is that the nasties do not kill you off – they just get in the way. It is possible to die however! We've become quite accustomed by now to Ultimate's oblique inlay cards which give the flavour but no playing hints for the game. Once again it's a question of

U·N·D·E·R·W·U·R·L·D·E



Sabreman takes a tumble



sorting out the hows, wheres and whatfors. Sabreman, recognisably the same intrepid hero from the previous game, pith helmet intact from his encounters in the jungle, has entered the Underwurlde to seek the Devil in his Lair and, of course, the way out. . . As with *Sabre Wulf*, scoring is by percentage of locations visited and a score accumulated by nasties killed and objects collected.

CRITICISM

● 'It looks as if the hyper load is here to stay because even Ultimate is using one now. Is the normal Spectrum loading system dead? *Underwurlde* is certainly no *Atic Atac* part three – it's a totally original game that will keep you enthralled for ages. From what I can make out from the usual Ultimate instructions all you have to do is find your way out –simple enough, no! There are quite a few things to hinder and help you, such as the plethora of Ultimate nasties. But these don't kill, they just make you bounce about all over the place and the only way I've found to die is to fall a long way. This is a mixed belssing because when you seem to be doing well, you seem to fall a lot. Sometimes it seems prctically impossible to finish a game when you want to. *Underwurlde* must take up every available byte because the maze is so huge and complex, something that became apparent after playing for twenty minutes and only scoring a paltry 10! Ultimate's graphics need no explanation, but an obvious item missing is the Hall of Fame (but I'm sure the spare byes from this went to a good cause). Ultimate have come up with another excellent game featuring the walking, dancing and now jumping Sabreman (all the nasties in the underwurlde seem to have scared him so much he's shrunk – or has he just had a wash to get rid of the jungle stink)? *Underwurlde* is more worthy of the 10 quid price tag than was *Sabre Wulf*, so there shouldn't be any complaints about that. I especially liked the volcanic bubbles on which you can stand and ride, and the eagles which carry you all over the place. This is more of an adventure than *Sabre Wulf* ever was, so you will have to pick up certain objects to get past certain creatures. If you don't like the QWERT layout, then you will be disappointed to learn that it's been used again on this game, but I found it easier to use than a joystick because you don't need down much and the up key is also used for jump. You just can't fail with this game, and if piracy means an end to games lie this, then piracy's not really worth it, is it?'

● 'Underwurlde *is definitely Ultimate's best game yet. It has super sound and graphics, as you would expect from ACG, plus (as far as I can tell at this stage) an even more complex playing area than SW. Moving around from level to level by skillfully jumping up and down the screen is made even harder by the various Gremlins and Harpies knocking you flying in mid jump. Sabreman has lost his sword but instead he can use various different weapons for several different purposes such as getting past the guardians. I really enjoyed playing* Underwurlde *and highly recommend it to everyone, although it's a shame about the high price.'*

● 'At a first glance, Sabreman resembles Bugaboo the flea. It's that athletic leap that does it. This huge jump combined with the fact that the nasties don't kill but do hinder, makes playing *Underwurlde* quite a different experience from anything Ulimate have done before – and it looks as though it should lead to some staggeringly high scores since killing the gremlins is essential if you are to keep your precarious balance! As usual, the graphics, movement and detail is superb – so is the sound. It is important to get a weapon as soon as you start, fortunately there is the red bubble gun, otherwise you can get hemmed something terrible by the nasties. The frustration level in this game is pitched about right, and there is always plenty going on. I liked the ropes and the large gaseous bubbles – it's playing details like this that keep Ultimate well ahead in the arcade stakes.

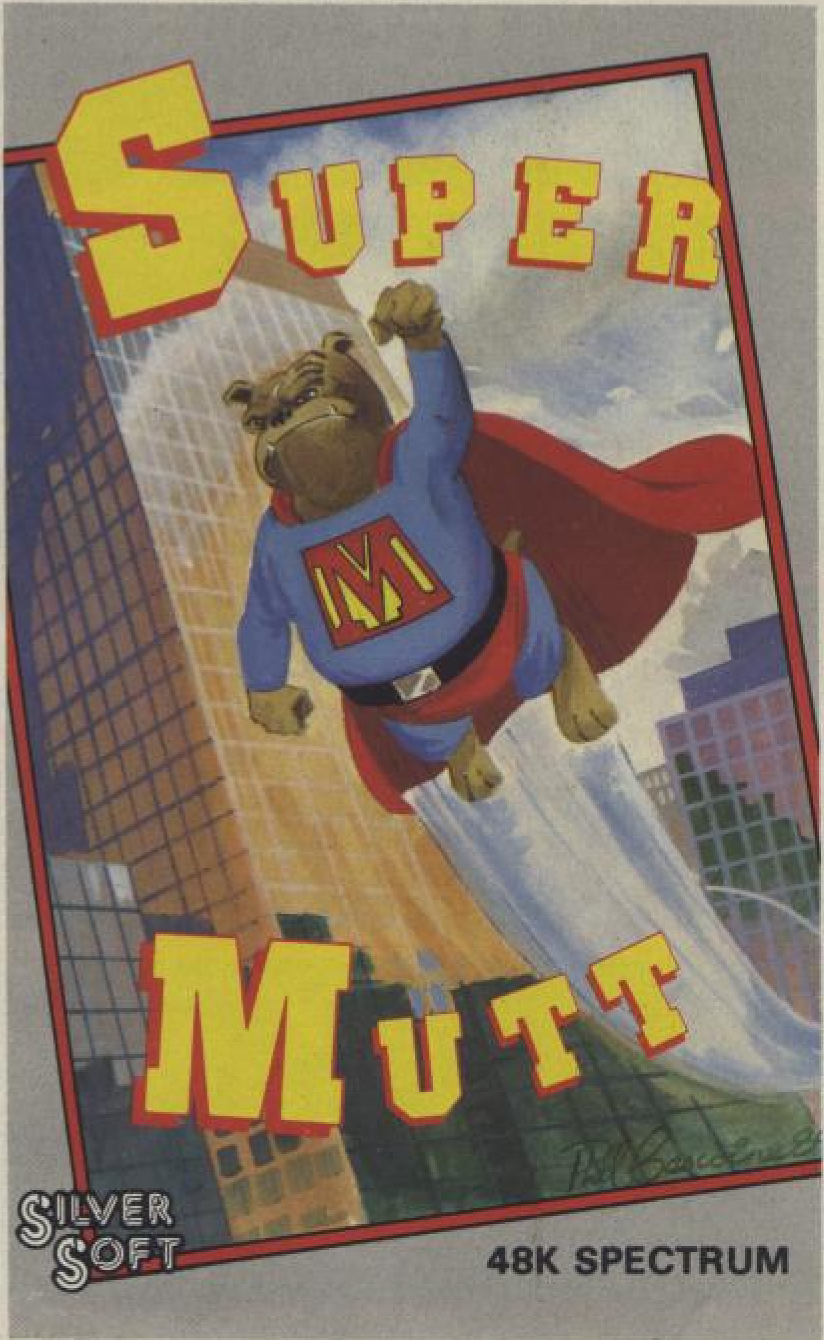
COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right, R/E up and jump/down, T to fire a possessed weapon, CAPS to V drop from rope, B to SPACE pick up/drop a weapon
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: very responsive, although the QWERT combination is awkward, all three reviewers agreed that they work quite well in this particular game
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: large, smooth, fast and detailed – excellent
Sound: very good, although it is restricted mostly to 'contact' noises
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 6
Screens: unknown at this time, but loads!
Special features: hyper load
General rating: excellent.

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	95%
Playability	96%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	96%
Value for money	86%
Overall	92%

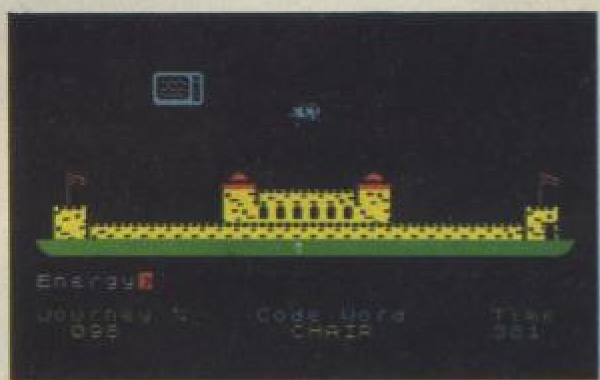
DON'T LOOK UP. . .

LOOK ON PAGES 20, 21, 22 FOR SUPER MUTT COMPETITION YOU MIGHT WINALOT OF PRIZES.



. . IT'S SUPER MUTT!

Watch Super Mutt wing his way to the Isle of Dogs to rescue his chum. He'll need your help to lead him through his fantastic adventure, so pad round to your local shop, and collar your dealer. If he's out of stock let us know - we'll bite him!



SILVER SOFT

Silversoft Ltd., London House, 271/273 King Street, London W6 9LZ 01-748 4125


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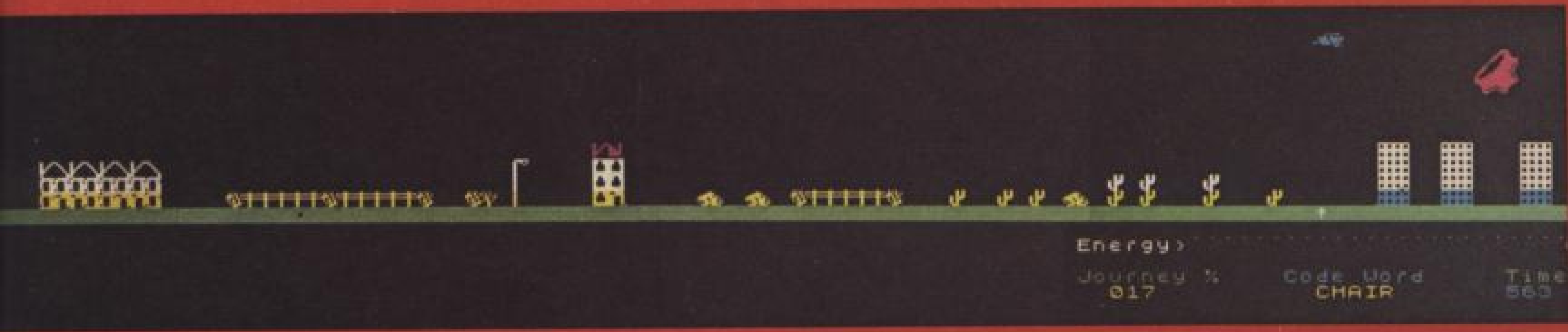


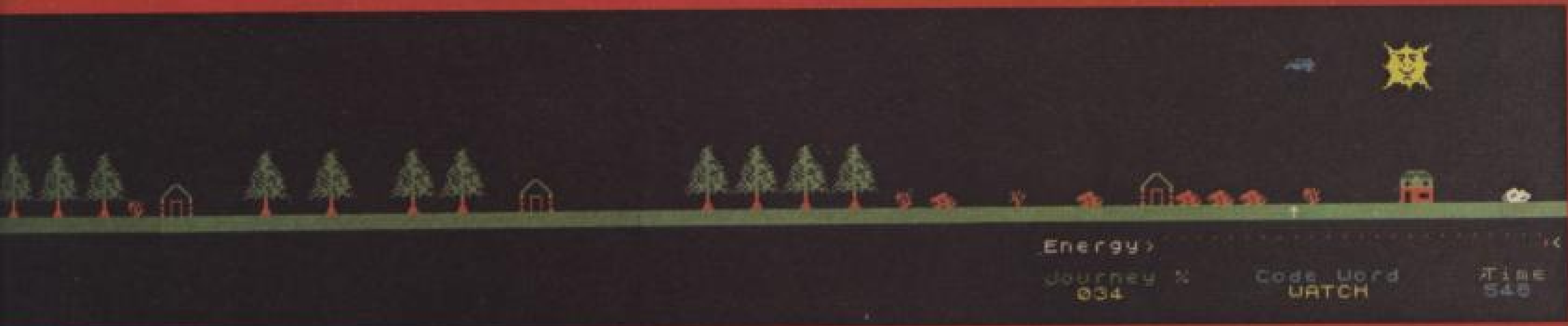


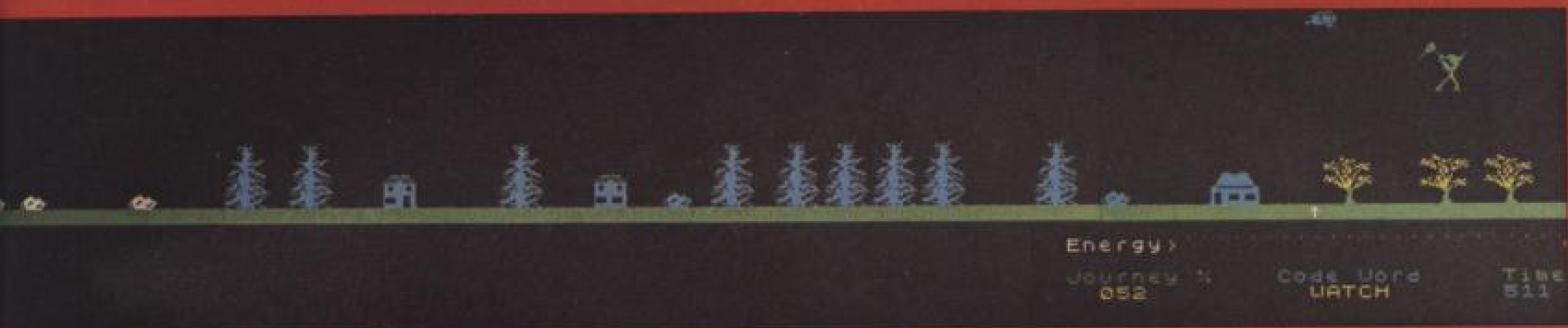


Win! Win!

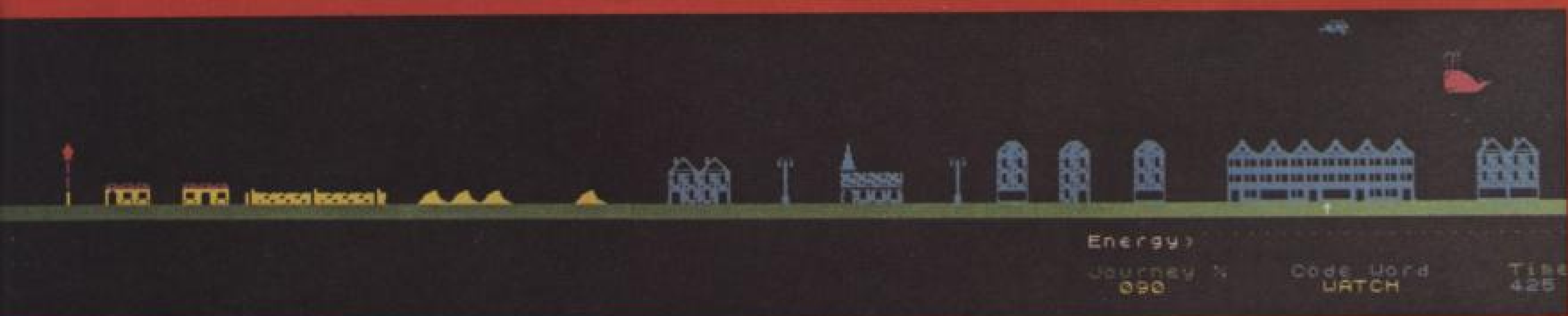

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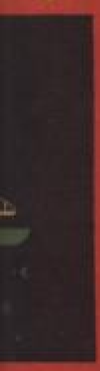












Win! With Silversoft and Super Mutt!

Crash Competition

Prizes galore in our brill contest overleaf...

WIN A MODEM!!

IN OUR SILVERSOFT COMPETITION

The new UNICOM MODEM has been described as a 'wonderful product'. Retailing at a mere £49.95, it looks set to outstrip rival models right from the start. It features auto-redial, auto baud-rate scan, auto-answer, full duplex and half duplex operation and connects up to anything with an RS232 or 423 serial interface. At the moment operating software is only available for the BBC home computer, but very soon all the major computers should be catered for. The UNICOM MODEM is not yet available on the market, but CRASH in association with SILVERSOFT has one to award to the winner of our joint competition.

Here's what to do. State in not more than 25 words why you would like to win the UNICOM MODEM.

entries to:

SILVERSOFT COMPETITION,
CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW,
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

to arrive no later than first post *January 18 1985*

I would like to win the UNICOM MODEM because

If I win one of the consolation prizes, the game I would like is ________

Name ________

Address ________

Postcode ________

The prizes:

1st: The overall winner will receive a UNICOM MODEM and a complete set of SILVERSOFT games for the Spectrum past, present and future! This means not only will you receive all their software currently available, but also all the software they have yet to produce. On the previous two pages you will have seen the entire screen layout of SILVERSOFT's newest game, *SUPERMUTT*, just one of many that the winner will receive.

2nd: One lucky runner up will also receive all the SILVERSOFT software past, present and future.

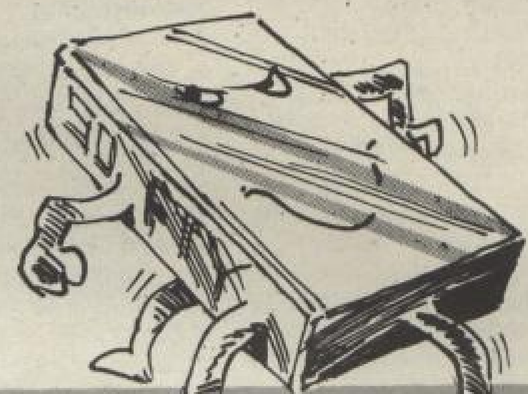
Also, there are 100 consolation prizes of one item of SILVERSOFT software, together with a free poster. You can name the game of your choice, but the posters are standard.



LETTERS

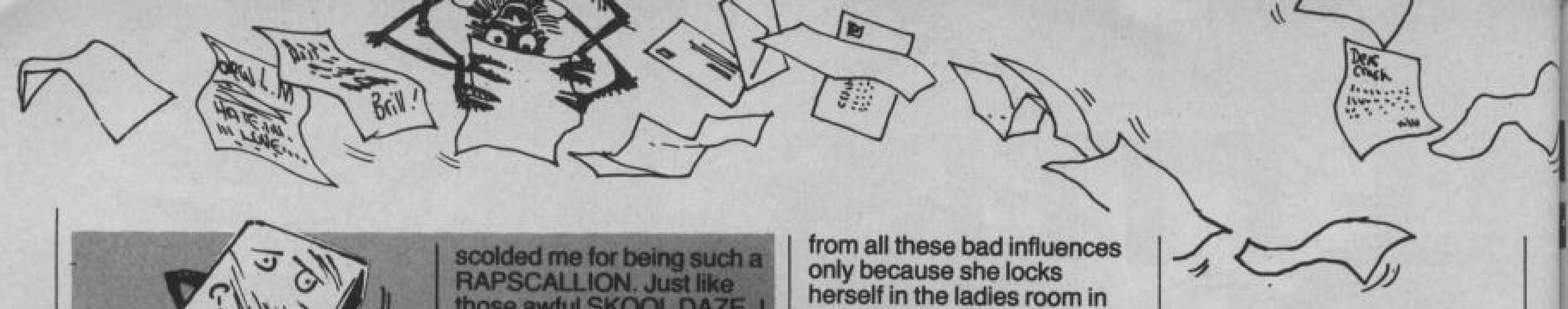
Each month I'll be choosing the best letter from the postbag, and, as well as publishing it, ***I'll send the writer £12 worth of software*** *of his or her choice (it can be two cassettes as long as they come within the £12). I've had to grovel on bended knee to the editor for this, so you'd better be grateful!*
Send your letters to ***Lloyd Mangram, CRASH Forum, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*** *I can't promise to print everything that comes in because space is precious (I'm told) but I'll do my best.*

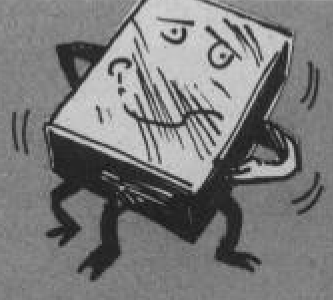
It's been a busy month, what with Christmas looming and Kevin, the new member of the CRASH team, dashing around interviewing everyone for the article in this issue about how CRASH isn't put together (never believe everything you read in print)! As usual it has also been another heartbreaking month of trying to decide who gets printed. But I think there is a nice sprinkling of different letters here, including one from Ireland and one from Yugoslavia. There are also two amusing letters, one which is mockingly abusive about all of us at CRASH (at least I think it's mocking) and one which just goes to show how much games have become a part of daily life. I picked this one for letter of the month. . .



SOFTWARE KALEIDOSCOPE

Dear Lloyd,
One day, while walking down the road with my friend JASPER, I heard a voice from a dark alley calling my name. 'PSSST, FRED', the voice whispered. I turned round to see the TRASHMAN, DENIS who as usual could only be seen THROUGH THE DRINKING GLASS. He had been up to his ANTICS and was totally PI-EYED. We quickly went over to the BARMY BURGERS restaurant where we asked Kenneth to look after him until help arrived. I tried to explain to Denis to wait with KENTILA (think about it) ambulance arrived, but by this time he was almost in THE HOUSE OF THE LIVING DEAD! We continued on our way down BLADE ALLEY but soon found ourselves in a CONFONTRATION with MUGSY the URBAN UPSTART from the factory down the road, AUTOMANIA Inc. He was built like the HULK and had obviously made a FACTORY BREAKOUT or escaped from the LOONY ZOO. He was definitely no HOBBIT (more like FRANK N. STEIN), although he was a bit STONKERS, as he always travelled on a POGO stick.
We both stood SPELLBOUND, not quite knowing what would happen next. Suddenly, from nowhere, PAT THE POSTMAN in his super THRUSTA van pulled up alongside and told us to JUMP in. We ran towards him, and with MUGSY behind the DEATHCHASE was on. We finally made it into the van, and with a WHEELIE we sped off at FULL THROTTLE. We left a furious MUGSY behind, and in his rage he tried to CHUCKIE EGG at our van, but missed.
'Our HERO' I exclaimed to Pat. He smiled modestly, always eagr to consider himself DEFENDA of the peace. Pat dropped us off outside the chemist, and we watched him ZZOOM off towards BEACH HEAD. We went into the shop and said hello to Alan the Chemist –or ALCHEMIST for short. We told him all about MUGSY, and he promised that his brother Rommel would get him back. We thanked him heartily, looking forward to ROMMEL'S REVENGE.
Outside it was snowing, and just as I stepped out a large wet SNOWBALL went SPLAT! right in my face. I looked up to see someone laughing and JUMPING. 'JACK!' I shouted angrily. He came over and I felt like giving him a good PUNCHY, but as he was only at the age where he was still having the BIRDS a BEES explained to him, I TRIAD to be nice. He was dressed as a SPECIAL AGENT because he had always facied himself as something of a SHERLOCK HOLMES. 'Today I am using my CODE NAME MAT' he explained, and said that he had a MESSAGE FROM ANDROMEDA, my sister; I was to buy her a nice big GOLDEN APPLE, a jar of APPLE JAM and a take-away from MR WIMPY. What a GREEDY GULCH, I thought to myself, but did what she said. I finally made it to the newsagents after what had seemed like the QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL. I asked Braxx, the newsagent (who's German)





if my copy of Crash was in yet, but she replied: 'Nein,' (which means 'no').
'AHHH!' I cried, 'I'M IN SHOCK'.
'Don't worry,' she added. 'I was only kidding'.
That's all I need, I thought to myself: a typical BRAXX BLUFF. She deserved to be put in front of a RIFLE RANGE for that.
'AUF WIEDERSEHEN PET!' she shouted.
When I got home my DOTTY sister immediately complained of being very hungry after waiting so long for my return. To make matters worse, my Mum scolded me for being such a RAPSCALLION. Just like those awful SKOOL DAZE, I thought, making my ESCAPE. I sat down to watch some WORLD CUP FOOTBALL on the telly, reassuring myself that after all, WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA. And as I settled down with a copy of my favourite magazine, I realised that I could ask for no greater happiness than a monthly dose of CRASH...
Craig Smith, Lincoln, Lincolnshire.

Craig is obviously a MANIC MINER when it comes to words, either that or his brain is a bit PSYTRAXX. But don't call him a BUGABOO or you'd better MINED-OUT, because he'll tell you to PUSH OFF. Still, it's £12 worth of software for the effort. AH DIDDUMS!
LM

RED PERIL

Dear Commie **** Merchants (TASS),
Listen readers, you are in dire peril. You are at the mercy of infiltrators. The staff at CRASH are not what they seem - they are really a bunch of Communist **** mongers! For example, take a look at Lloyd 'Fascist Bullyboy' Mangram. Printing all these arguments is his way of attempting to split the nation. Ultimately (sic – LM) he intends to convert the computer world to his dastardly ways: Communism! Derek Brewster is really a member of the Secret Police, out to engage the interest and co-operation of software houses andconvert them all into Reds. Poor old Micromega have already taken the bait; as did Quicksilva and Neptune before them.
I pass on a warning: anyone loading *Jasper* must immediately grab their ear plugs and jam them in the appropriate holes, because there is, in fact, a Soviet brain-washing message transmitted, closely followed by a 'conversion' routine. Keyboard-bashers and joystick-wrenchers beware! The Frey brothers are worse than the Kray twins. They are the heavy-mob of the Soviet spy ring. Oli, peaceful artist by day, can easily be



transformed int a raging animal if his temper is aroused (you should see his pic in issue 2 – boy does he look mean!). Franco is the calmer of the two, and deposits his steel teeth in a magnetic field at night. His 9ft frame and 40in chest serves him well, but he has a brain the size of a peanut. Needless to say, Matthew and Chris are commies as well, after being subjected to endless brain-washing programs on their now-red Spectrums.
To top it all I have reliable evidence (thanks Mr Blunt) that Roger Kean is a Double Agent.
The only person to remain unaffected by this is dear old Denise (subs). She is free from all these bad influences only because she locks herself in the ladies room in order to paint her toenails, undisturbed. Yors democratically,
Sarbjit Singh Johal (15), Hayes, Middlesex.

I'm astonished by the frightening accuracy of your secret inelligence in matters relating to CRASH. On only two points are you in error. Firstly, I am not a bullyboy, as anyone will tell you, and secondly 'dear old Denise' doesn't have any toenails to paint – so there.
LM

STICK IT!

Dear Lloyd,
With reference to John J Tapper's letter, I would just like to say that I hate the way he makes out every Spectrum owner to be a snob with a rich daddy. I went to work for two or three weeks before I could afford to buy my 48K, so stick it bored and unemployed.
Anthony Grasso, Purley, Surrey.

Now, now...

EARLY ALARM

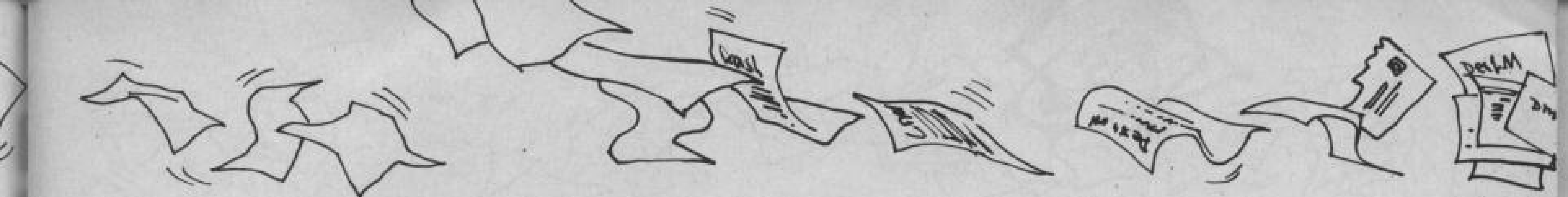
Dear Lloyd,
After reading about *Pyjamarama* in CRASH I thought oh great! at last a challenging game, and a CRASH Smash too. So I rushed out and bought a copy, but alas when I got to the shops I found that the game cost £7.95 and not £6.95 as advertised in your magazine. I borrowed the extra money from my kind, generous big brother (with a grovel, grovel, pretty plese), paid up and dashed home. I had visions of hours of fun spent trying desperately to solve the puzzle. However, after just 12 hours I had solved it and awakened Wally. Can't the programmers do better than this?
D. Blasbery, Skelmersdale, Lancs.

Obviously you're above average intelligence for these arcade games – perhaps you should turn your attention to adventures and leave really simple games like Pyjamarama *to idiots like CRASH reviewers.*
LM

ROTTEN PIRATES

Dear Crash,
Thank you very much for your article on the Piracy Dossier, it made very interesting reading. I was particularly interested in the reaction to question 3 about commercial piracy. It strikes me that home copiers are simply passing the buck of the damage being done to the software industry onto the shoulders of the commercial pirates. While I would not condone commercial piracy in any way, the fact is that although it is morally worse than home copying, the latter is far more widespread and therefore far more damaging. Relatively few people own commercially pirated programs, while of all the people I know with home computers most have large collections of home copied programs.
Another popular excuse for copying software is that the games are just too expensive. I agree that most of us can't splash out six or seven pounds evey day, or fill a trolley in John Menzies at regular intervals; but someone who has bought a computer for £130 can't exactly be penniless, can they? I think we've had the reason for the price of software very graphically explained to us by Shahid Ahmad (the Piracy Dossier), but even if the majority of games were to come down in price (unlikely) would home copying cease? I doubt it. The general train of thought seems to be: if you can copy a game for nothing, why spend money? Even if it is only a couple of quid.
Matthew Bannerman, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

Despite arguments from software houses that commercial piracy is on the increase, especially through illegal 'libraries' –illegal in the sense that they do not gain the essential permission of the software houses to loan tapes – there can be little doubt that it is the home copying which is the real bane. The answer seems to be hyperloading techniques, although they are not entirely proof. On the other hand, they are also inconvenient to the genuine buyer when the tapes won't load properly.
LM



RIP OFF COVERS

Dear Lloyd,
Having recently received back issue No.4 and filled in the questionnaire on piracy, I decided to write and express my views on the subject.
I am a pirate and I have 197 illegal copies in my collection and only two originals. My friends and I have a small circle of about five contacts, and whenever a new game comes in they each distribute copies to heir friends, thus beginning the software pirates 'family tree'. The main reasons why I pirate are: 1. Games are far too expensive. 2. The description on the inlay covers is nearly always wrong. When I pick up a new game I expect to see a screen photo and what the game is really about, ie s it fast? does it have smooth graphics? is it as bad as *Zaxxan* by Starzone? Most new games are starting to do the above.
A shop in our town that sells software now has an illegal library club where you pay £1 for life membership and can choose a game to keep overnight for 50p. I am a member and can add new games to my collection very quickly.
New programs are getting hard to copy now as a lot of games are becoming headless and won't load into any copy programs. *Automania* has proved to be the hardest to copy because it runs at twice the normal speed.
I am writing this letter as a desperate plea to software firms to put their prices down.
A pirate, UK.

I get the feeling that your plea will have to be a bit more persuasive than this, dear Pirate (UK), since it seems to smack more of selfishness than genuine concern. The next reader has a slightly different view of the situation. .
LM

CASTING STONES. . .

Dear Sir,
I have just finished reading your November issue, which I found to be rather interesting. All was well until I read the Piracy Dossier on page 130; lo and behold a letter from a Mr Shahid Ahmad of London NW1, proclaiming to the world that Mr Paul Watts is scum, stupid and should be castrated. He also states that Mr Watts is 'full of ****' (does this mean he swallowed four micro-drives?). Seriously though, I would like to ask Shahid Ahmad a few questions: Have you ever
a) Travelled on a bus or train without a ticket?
b) Fare dodged completely?
c) Photocopied an article of interest?
d) Entered a cinema through the fire exit?
e) Evaded paying tax on car or undisclosed earnings?
f) Copied records or cassettes and/or lent them to friends?
g) Copied or taped any TV programme or other pre-recorded video cassette and/or lent them to friends?
Although some of these questions may not seem entirely relevant, they all, in one way or another, involve fraud. If Mr Ahmad can honestly answer 'no' to every one of them, then fair enough, castigate Mr Watts by all means; but if, on the other hand, he has infringed upon any of the above then let him heed the words of a very famous cha who once said something like: 'Let he who is without sin cast the first stone'.
I would like to make it clear that I neither defend nor condemn th words or attitude of Mr Watts, and that I have never yet met anyone who is perfect in every way.
Frank Marrai, Buckhurst Hill, Essex.

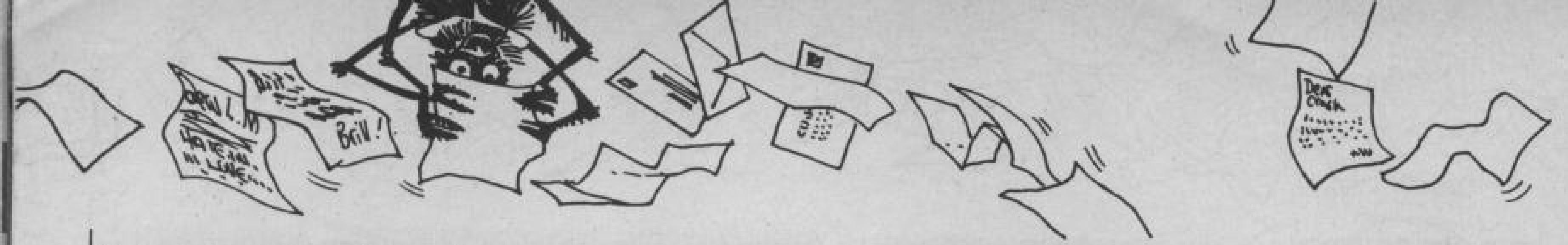
I was once told by someone that it is impossible to be perfectly good, so if you want to be perfect, being perfectly bad is the only thing to do. Sounds like a paradise recipe for pirates. Seriously though, casting stones may be a good moral argument, but it is somewhat impractical if you're really trying to cope with this sort of situation. The sad truth is, that no one actually minds ripping off someone else, but they hate someone else ripping them off.

TOO EXPENSIVE?

Dear Lloyd,
I would just like to say that I am sick to death of readers complaining about the price of Spectrum software. The English computer 'buffs' just don't know how lucky they are with the price of games over there. Here in Dublin the cheapest and worst games sell at around £7.50, while the average retail price is about £10 or £11. The more expensive gams such as *The Hobbit* and *Sherlock Holmes* sell for about £22! How many Irish Spectrum owners would be only too delighted to pay £6 for a game!
The Spectrum itself costs £200 for the 48K version, £160 for the 16K version. Microdrive and Interface 1 each sell for £70, while a Kempston joystick and interface sells for £40. CRASH itself costs all of £1.41!
Not only do the software and peripherals cost a lot more, but they also take a lot longer to get here, and as the stocks are very limited they are usually sold out after only a couple of days. Certain software products or hardware items never even appear over here. CRASH usually takes about a week to arrive.
So in future, when complaining about things in England, just remember how bad it is here on the Emerald Isle!
Michael Wood, Ballsbridge, Dublin.
Well you're not the first Irish person to complain about the prices of things over there, including CRAH. Still you're luckier I think than a writer later on from Yugoslavia who finds it hard to get anything imported unless it is a present. The next writer disagrees over the cost of software. . .
LM

UNDERPRICED

Dear Lord Mangram of Ludlow,
My view on software is that it is GROSSLY UNDERPRICED! Now please calm down; don't send the hit squad round (I won't be in). I want to add that I am not rich, and nor is my father; neither am I the sales director of a software company. I am in fact none other than a poverty-stricken student from the Trent Polytechnic in Nottingham, and I'm clever enough to realise that a good many of the top games now on the market are worth a great deal more than we pay for them.
If we assume that the average game in an arcade costs 10p,



then a game which costs £6 should give at least sixty goes. Any game that provides more is very good value for money. Looking through the CRASH hotline chart I notice that several of the top games come under this category. For example, I don't know how many times I've played *Manic Miner*, but it must be over 250. I also reckon I've played *Atic Atac* 200 times, *Lunar Jetman* 150, *Chuckie Egg* 120, *Arcadia* 110, *Jet Set Willy* 100 etc etc.
When are people going to stop moaning about high prices and start realising what good value for money they are getting?
James Penwell, Beeston, Nottingham.



RECORD BREAKER

Dear Lloyd,
After reading the CRASH review of *Daley's Decathlon* (issue No.10), I thought I would write to you about an odd event that happened to me when I first bought thegame in August. I was maing my first attempt at the long jump when I landed directly wih my back level to the line. I considered this to be a pretty feeble effort, but to my delight the scoresman measured out the rest of the pit and then the track, giving me a jump of 253 meters! Is this an Olympic achievement?
J Langstone, Solihull, West Midlands.

No – it's a pretty feeble effort. .
LM



SLOW GAMES

Dear CRASH,
This letter contains several points which I feel I have to make. The first and probably the most important concerns the length of time that software from other parts of Britain takes to reach Scotland. This is perhaps not so bad when it is just an ordinary piece of software you want, but when it's a piece of competition software it is utterly infuriating.
This happened to me with The Ket Trilogy (from Incentive). I had completed the first two parts in record time (*Mt of Ket*in only one week, *T. of Vran* in under 24 hours) so I thought I had a great chance of winning the video. I waited patiently and eventually saw an ad in a magazine announcing the release as September 19 (the official release date) of the third part. I thought I would wait until it was on sale in the shops rather than order it through the post which always seems to take so long. Alas, it took nine days after being released to arrive in only one of all the shops in Glasgow that stock computer software! And it wasn't even one of the giants like John Menzies or WH Smith – instead it was humble HMV, better known for their records than for their software. I was disgusted to say the least. I had searched for that game every day all over Glasgow and spent more than £3 on bus fares in the process. All hopes I had of winning the competition were dashed because nine days is a great deal of computer time to lose. Surely, to be fair to all UK CRASH readers who wait patiently for news, competitions etc. , all software houses could arrange to have their games in the shops in advance of the release date to save frustrating hours (and days) being wasted.
Paul A. McCusker, Glasgow, Scotland.

Distribution of games software is still in its infancy and there are a few things to sort out before games reach everywhere at once. Even in the field of magazines, things don't arrive everywhere in the country at the same time. It's certainly an area which needs some further attention, but it has less to do with the software houses than it does with distrubution and retail.
LM

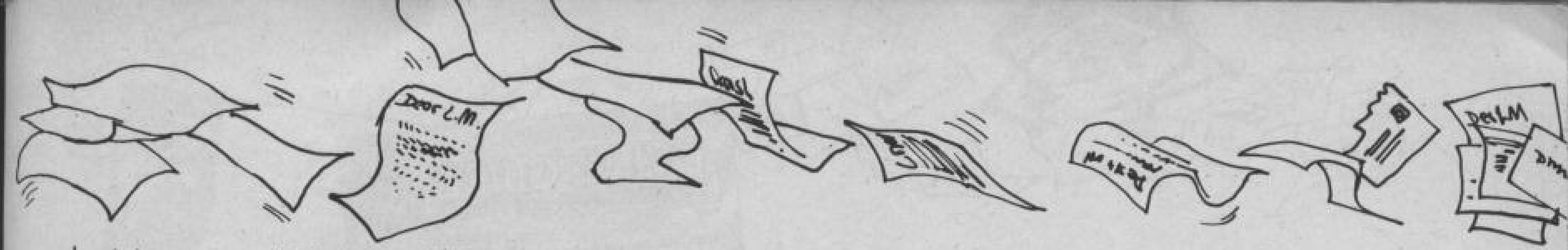
FROGGER

Respected Sir,
A few months ago I read a small piece in CRASH about a software company exporting Spectrum software to France. It's about time too I say! I went to France last year and happened to take my Spectrum with me – probably illegal but I did bring it back. I stayed with someone I know in Paris and ran *Lunar Jetman*for him. He just freaked out guys, he really did! He couldn't believe it, and was bowled over by the standard of some of the other games I showed him (which were slightly easier). 'Sacre Bleu!' he said. A little later he showed me his own computer; a state-of-the-art MSX machine released a few months previously in France, the Thomson TO7. It struck me as the worst computer I had ever set eyes upon. It had flash moulding, built-in light pen, cassette-style plug-in ROM, about half K memory and a Basic to give Sir Clive an apoplexy.
The Basic itself was plug-in and the instructions on it were laughable. If this is representative of msx i don't think Spectrum owners need worry about software being overwhelmed by drivel. If it brings in nother sector of the public – the Green Wellie Brigade – then they can fit MSX in their Volvo estates and feed them to the labradors for all I care. I really don't think there's any need to worry.
By the way, what does MSX stand for? Mighty Silly Xpectations, perhaps. . .
M. Chatfield, Gosport, Hants.

The arguments over MSX will no doubt make for some interesting reading over the next few months. Our beloved Editor with brackets between his names has already stirred up a few souls to write in agreeing and disagreeing. The next writer has a few more things to say. . .
LM

LISTEN HERE ROG. . .

Dear Crash,
(To be read to a background of Land of Hope and Glory):
Throughout history we, the British, have been invaded twice and left alone twice by foreign armies. Over the past 70 years or so we have held our standards high on the battlefields of Europe. We have fought in the air, on the land and on the seas, and our brave soldiers have died in vast numbers to uphold liberty, free speech and the right to buy foreign computers. Now believe it or not, we live in a capitalist society, first pioneered by the Americans. We live under the so-called shadow of their economic fist. And yet we, on this piddly little island are still under the impression tha British is best, forget the rest. Don't misunderstand me – I'm not being unpatriotic or anything. I'm just saying that if we're to make a success of economic cooperation we've got to buy our computers elsewhere as well as sell them elsewhere. Some may say that the Japanese are castrating our industry, butthat's probably



only because we didn't do it to them first.
'Here comes the MSX!' cries Roger Kean, editor of Britain's most influential Spectrum magazine. 'Let's tell everyone how terrible it is so that we Brits will go on buying Spectrums, which are three years old, have one channel sound and really amazing games!'
Now listen here Rog - don't you think you're preaching to the converted? I know as well as you do that the Spectrum is ultra-ace. But so is the Amstrad and the Einstein and, whether you like it or not, the MSX. Being a programmer for both the MSX and the Spectrum I would like to put the record straight: the British MSX has a 64K memory, including the screen memory, therefore making it 16K larger than the Spectrum. Despite the groans from what's-his-name at design Design, I have to inform you that screen addressing on the MSX is faster and a hell of a lot easier in M/C than the Spectrum. Hence: faster graphics.
You obviously feel threatened by the MSX. Never fear – I'm sure that 1 million Spectrum owners are't suddenly going to get up one morning and dump their machines down the loo! Neither are the software houses going to give up. For instance, all the companies I've spoken to are not doing new MSX stuff - just converting old Specy games. That's because Spectrum = money.
So don't worry chaps, MSX is no hassle. It's a good standard for Basic. But M/C capabilities (minus sound) are almost the same. Conclusion: the Spectrum is (in Basic and sound) worse. But MSX is on the way. And if the Yanks threw it out, so may we.
Charles Cohen, Totteridge, London.

I rather got the impression that the Yanks didn't throw MSX out – they made it clear it wouldn't be allowed IN. Still, if nothing else, the arrival of the MSX machines has thrown some urgently needed light on the lesser capabilities of the Spectrum, which have been highlighted by the recent release of the Spectrum ...



PLUSSER AND PLUSSER

Dear Lloyd,
No doubt flavour of the month at the moment is the new Spectrum keyboard, and while I can only praise the efforts of Sinclair Research to provide spectrum owners with a decent keyboard all I can say is that we've waited long enough for it! We've been crying out for a new 'official' keyboard for over a year now and it just goes to show how long it takes for Sinclair to deliver the goods.
I totally agree that we need a Spectrum upgrade NOW, not in a years time when the spectrum could well be dead due to the MSX invasion. Now that the Plus has been launched it can only be hoped that this upgrade will be in the form of an expansion pack to fit the new model. I don't think three channel sound, a sprite chip and something to enable more than two colours per attribute is a lot to ask for; after all, Sinclair graced us with Interface 2 which, when it came out, was of no use to anyone, using non-standard joystick keys and ROM cartridges at £15 a time which were mostly of 16K games that only take a minute to load from cassette anyway, so why bother buying them?

Even now, a year later, Sinclair still hasn't released any new ROM cartridge games which are available only on ROM. People just won't pay £15 for games on ROM which they bought six months ago on cassette for £6.
So after giving us Interface 2 which no one really needed (there were plenty of other joystick interfaces available at the time), how about giving us the upgrade that the Spectrum could well do with if it is to survive in he games machine market? Let's also hope that Parker make a ROM cartridge interface really worth having.
T. Henry, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear.

Here, Here! Let's make it soon Sinclair!
LM

MISSING PRIZE

Dear Lloyd,
I would like to inform CRASH readers of how much trouble I had getting my prize from *Computer and Video Games*. I was top scorer in the 7th Empire competition, and duly informed themagazine of what three cassettes I would like. After eagerly awaiting their arrival for a couple of months I decided to phone and find out what had happened to them. I was assured that they were on their way. This went on for quite a while, so eventually, tired of receiving the same old excuse every time I rang, I spoke to the assistant editor and he said he would have them sent on to me. I ended up talking to him on several occasions, and each time it was the same proceedure: name, address, which tapes do you want, etc. In the end I got tired of this and told him that I knew very well he had no intention of ending me the tapes and that I would contact my father's solicitor. At this he sounded very shocked, but the games arrived a few days later.
So after about six months (and





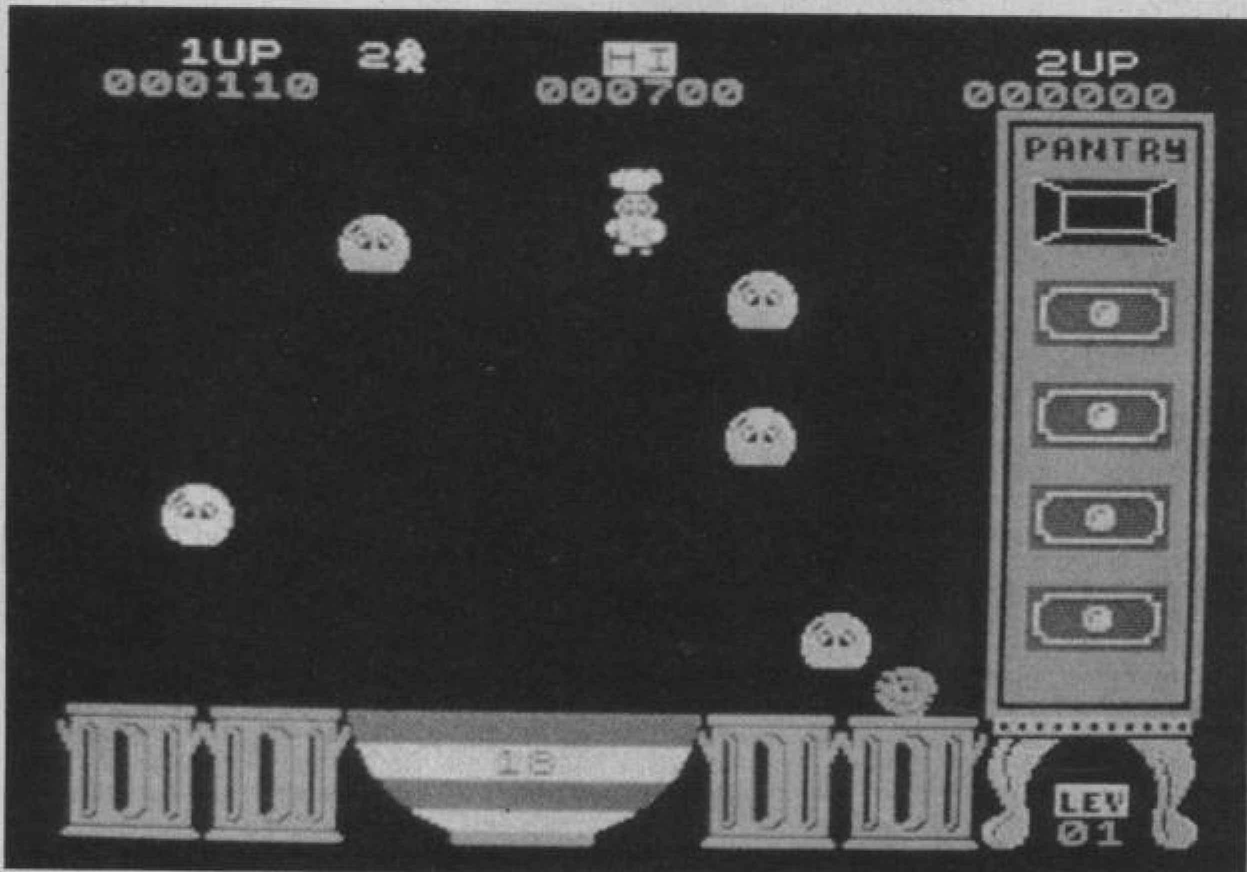
a large telephone bill) I finally got what was rightfully mine. But I wonder how many other winners, less persistent than myself, have been cheated out of their prizes?
N. Faruque, Preston, Lancs.

You sound as though you were very unfortunate in this matter. I'm surprised to hear it, although I can understand that it happens (I'm sure we aren't blameless either). Competitions are fun to have in the magazine, but they sometimes create all sorts of administrative problems, especially as the results are collated sometime before sending out prizes. This, added on top of inter-office communications can lead to such circumstances. It goes to show that perseverance pays!
LM

FUNNY FARM

Dear Lloyd,
I am a member of a very special institution. It caters for those of us who have gone insane because we can't get staggeringly high scores on computer games. We are the people who manage to score the least number of points possible on games such as *Cookie*, *Pssst* and *Jet Pac* to name but a few.
I am writing because we desperately need help. Readers should send in any tips they may have for the above games. Help on *Cookie* is the most important because a certain person (who shall remain nameless) has not yet progressed beyond level two. The only plus point in this tragic stoy is that this same person managed to complete *Atic Atac* in only four days. This boosted his confidence quite a bit, and soon afterwards he went on to complete level three of *Pssst* and level five of *Jet Pac*.
Lloyd, you and the excellent magazine you work for are the institute's last hope. Even as I write a 15 year old inmate is chewing at the straps of his eighth consecutive strait-jacket in a frenzied attempt to get at his 48K Spectrum and flush it down the toilet. Assistance is urgently required.
Doctor Steve, Royston, Herts.





*I think the only remedy is to take four ****'s after every meal, take the bull by the horns and turn into a microdrive.*
LM

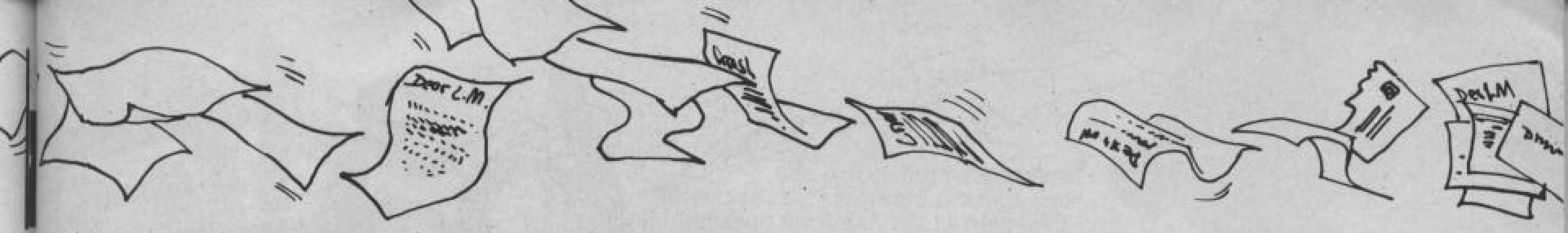
NEVER TOO OLD

Dear Lloyd,
I suppose at 36 I'm a bit old to be reading your magazine, but must admit that I look forward to each new issue as eagerly as I used to await the computer des. Perhaps I've never grown up, but I feel I enjoy CRASH as much as any of your younger readers.
I could be critical (as some are) of the spelling mistakes, but I don't care, because for sheer entertainment and readability your magazine probably beats the lot (except for *Micro Adventurer* – oops! Didn't mean to say that).
However, there is one thing my wife and I miss in the new CRASH, and that's the categorisations and potted reviews of Spectrum software that you included in the first couple of issues – we still constantly refer to them.
So we hope ultimately that you'll be issuing either a supplement to your Christmas issue, or maybe an annual with condensed versions of all your reviews to date under the appropriate headings.
Neil Talbott, Bromsgrove, Worcs.

I don't think 36 is too old at all – the fact that I remember the first ever Beatles record coming out has nothing to do with it! There have been plans afoot to redo the Guide on possibly a quarterly basis. One problem is that the Guide was getting so long it was costing too much on typesetting. Over the past few issues there have been a number of changes made to the way CRASH is typeset, which makes it less expensive to produce, so I guess the Guide will be on again before much longer.
LM

ARTISTIC LICENCE?

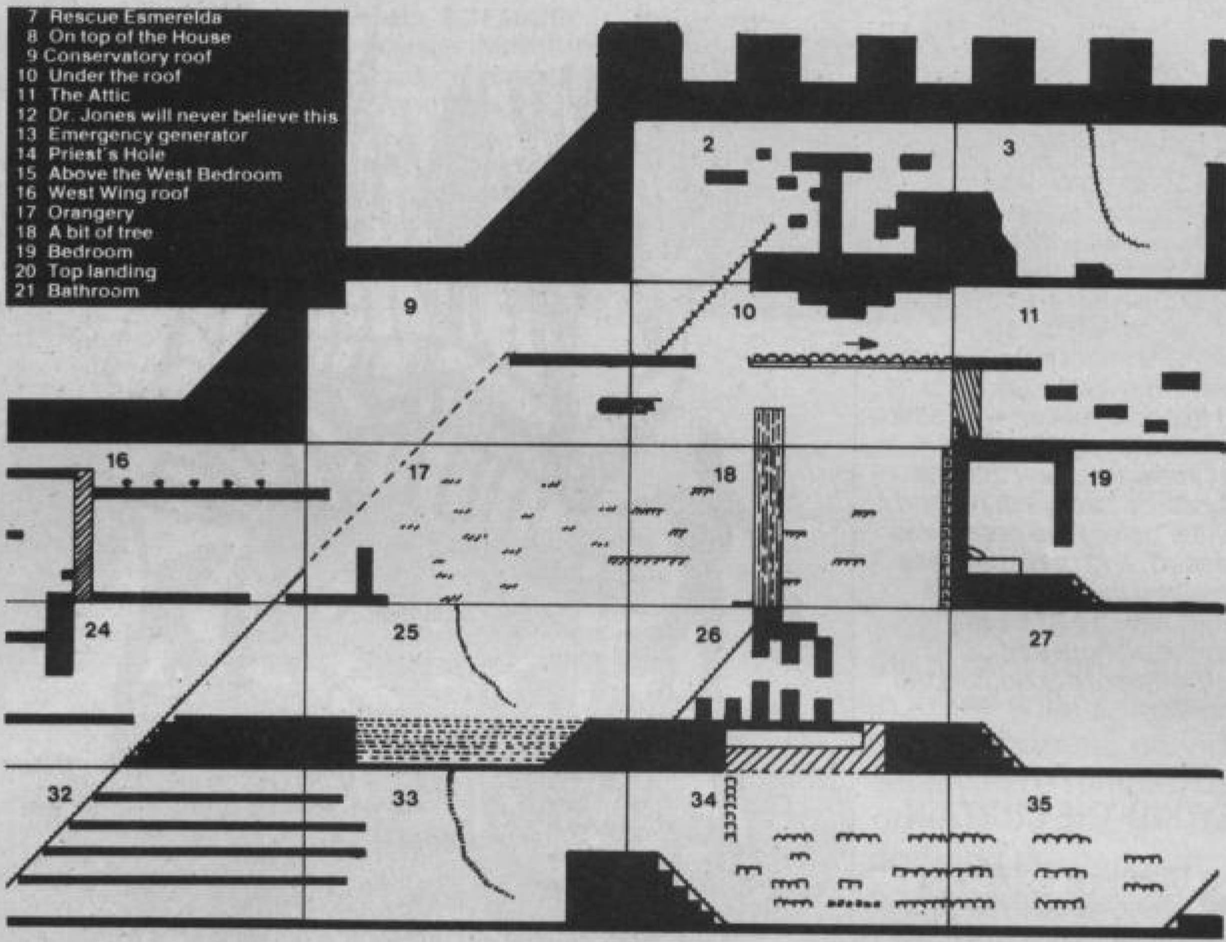
Dear Crash,
Help! Is a long suffering Mum of a computer-crazy son allowed to air her views in your excellent magazine?
It has always bugged me (see, I'm picking up the jargon already) that many computer games, tapes and their supporting advertising



material have elaborate illustrations which bear little or no resemblance to the actual graphics which appear on the screen.
I'm sure that in any other product this would constitute misrepresentation. The illustration on a box of chocolate cakes or a packet of fish fingers, for example, is always realistic, so why do the computer firms stretch the point to such an extent?
Some may say it's artistic licence - I prefer to call it a big con-trick.
Mrs D. E. Smith, Preston, Lancs.

Strong words Mrs. Smith! I must say, the pictures on packets of fish fingers and the like always seem far bigger, nicer and more succulent looking than the actual contents of the packet. Still, it's a valid point – but perhaps you should compare computer games more with books than fish fingers – packaging is part of the fun, as long as it doesn't exceed the dictates of honesty.





CON-SERVATORY ROOF

Dear Lloyd,
I think you deserve a pay rise. There, now that I've grabbed your attention I would like to say that J. D. 's letter about the legendary *JSW* bugs should start a flood of letters on the subject (a pay rise, surely?).
There certainly seems to have been an amazing lack of complaints in computer mags on this mega-blunder by Software Projects. Well Lloyd, please let everyone know that SP are definitely not having a competition with the final Miner Willy game at Christmas. I am a Miner Willy and SP fan, but I am disgusted by this decision.
A friend and I were obsessed with the game and competition when it first came out. During our Easter holidays we spent over a week playing the game until six or seven in the morning, and then resuming playing after some sleep. We also amassed huge phone bills by phoning Liverpool time after time to ask : 'Has it been won yet?' or 'How do you do Conservatory Roof?'. The replies, of course, were always 'No' and 'There is a way'.
Our problems were complicated by the fact that a certain magazine in Ludlow had given us the impression that there were 64 screens in the game. Hence we concentrated all our efforts on finding those other four b****y screens! (please note – CRASH readers now also talk in asterisks). I reckon you must have corrected this BUG in your *JSW* review, but we were unable to get this issue. We were eventually put right after a terrible week trying to get through the windows in 'On the Roof' (among other things) by SP themselves. Naturally, we were not too pleased with your mag, although it is still the best for quality andvalue). I wonder if other readers were led astray by your error?
Kevin Graham, Fort William, Scotland.

Jet Set Willy *has certainly been a sore point with many readers. In defence of our preview of the game, we were*



only able to go by what we were also told at the outset, and there certainly wasn't time to verify everything before the real review was written – otherwise our reviewers might have won the prize! What it all adds up to, is that the competition was a bit silly in the circumstances – but I know for a fact that the inlay cards had been printed months before the game was released, and of course they contained the competition details which had been planned without any knowledge of the bugs in the program.
LM

BEYOND THE CURTAIN

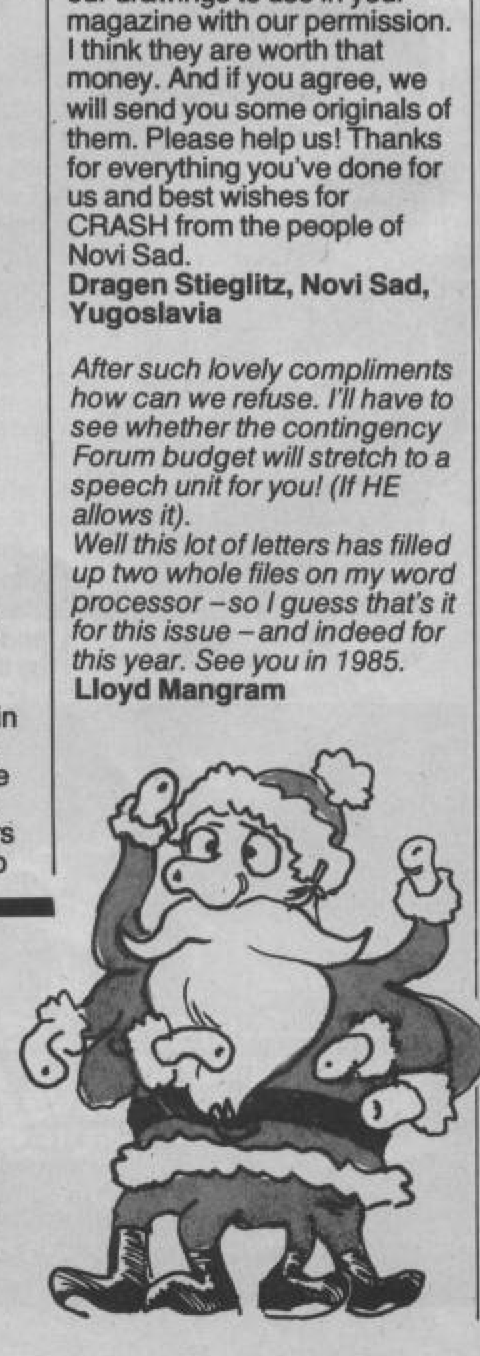
Dear Crashers!
Very lately we received your package containing CRASH issues from June, July and September. I think it's not necessary to mention that now, after just three days of circling, those magazines look old enough to get into the museum of computer magazines! Yeah! It's really a magazine. The kids are not so good at English, but they were really screaming about the pictures in it. Three days and it passed over 20 hands. The same thing happened with *Your Computer* three months ago, and now our teacher –leader of the computer section in our school – is subscribed to *Your Computer*. Now one of us has decided to subscribe for CRASH, and when he has finished the counting of his £ you will have a customer in Yugoslavia.
I'd like to thank you very much for sending us your examples and I want to inform you about the situation in my country so you can know what is going on here.
We're just really starting.



There are only a few micros produced here which can be used at home. But with software it's quite different. We are so far away from Britain, which now is the hottest place for computers (after the arrival of MSX especially), but a lot of programs come our way, by some strange ways, so we can tell it's a lot of software available. Software makers in Yugoslavia are far ahead in Hardware, and the things we do are, or can be, on a level with all other software writers in the world. Here in our club section studio we have now gathered some real talents in all stuffs of art and programming. We do graphics that are much like those in *Mugsy*, some animation, cause we make movies too. Very closely we done a title for a TV using some Superload-routines and of course our own capabilities. Now we have an idea of creating computer music, yes, totally computer music. Spectrums, Commodores and a little Casio 602-P could really mak a good noise. This music will be done with no acoustics, just wires. So, for a vocal we need a thing that we just cannot get - a speech synthesiser. We will be pleased if you can help us get a speech synthesiser. A CURRAH is not so expensive, but it needs to be a present from some foreign firm before it can be legally imported.
So if you can help us, send it as a present to us and we will draw you back with some other things. We can offer you our drawings to use in your magazine with our permission. I think they are worth that money. And if you agree, we will send you some originals of them. Please help us! Thanks for everything you've done for us and best wishes for CRASH from the people of Novi Sad.
Dragen Stieglitz, Novi Sad, Yugoslavia

After such lovely compliments how can we refuse. I'll have to see whether the contingency Forum budget will stretch to a speech unit for you! (If HE allows it).
Well this lot of letters has filled up two whole files on my word processor – so I guess that's it for this issue – and indeed for this year. See you in 1985.
Lloyd Mangram

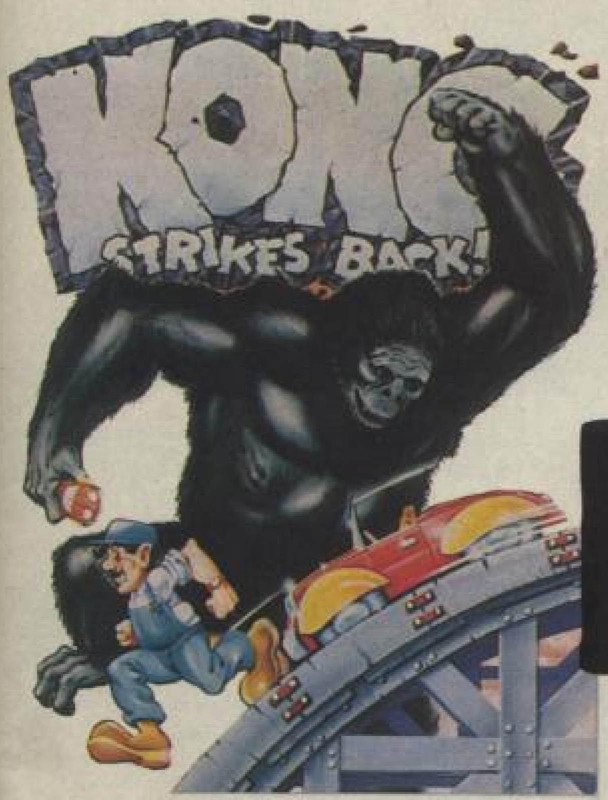
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the good

Yeh, only the good will survive in this the Superstar's,(that's me), first supa-game. . . **"Roland's Rat Race"**. Yeh, I'll really need your help, Rat Fans, to wind my way through the underground Rodent World of ladders, lifts, bats and all kinds of creepy crawlies, where I must find the keys to free my furry friends. I can't wait to use my glue gun . . . "Stick 'em down!" . . . on those monster meanies. See you on your screen, from your cuddly, adorable me.
. . . Roland Rat, Superstar.



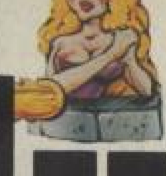


the BAD

The fun of the fair and the fury of Kong! Now you can know what it feels like to be a dodgem, only this time you're running up and down the Roller Coaster dodging the cars, giant buns and jumping springs. But the fun has only just begun!...wait until the fury starts! The wacky Waltzer and the zany Swinging Gym are enough to unhinge the sanest fun fair fanatic. **Kong Strikes Back** is all good fun but it's bound to bring out the bad in you!



and the Ughly!



Ugh! The Hunch is back! Your favourite bell ringer, the all-conquering Quasimodo, swings into action on another breathtaking, action- packed extravaganza. Set the bells sounding and Esmerelda's heart pounding with Quasi's astounding derring dos and athletic antics. The bats in the belfry may send you bonkers but be as bold as brass, give yourself a pat on the hump and, WATCH THAT FIREBALL! . . . phew! . . . Our hero's revenge is a winner all the way, yes, it's definitely for you . . hoo!

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OK sport, welcome to down under. Time was when those pesky misers weren't chasin' us around and things were a sight easier. Droppin' rocks on 'em will slow 'em down some!

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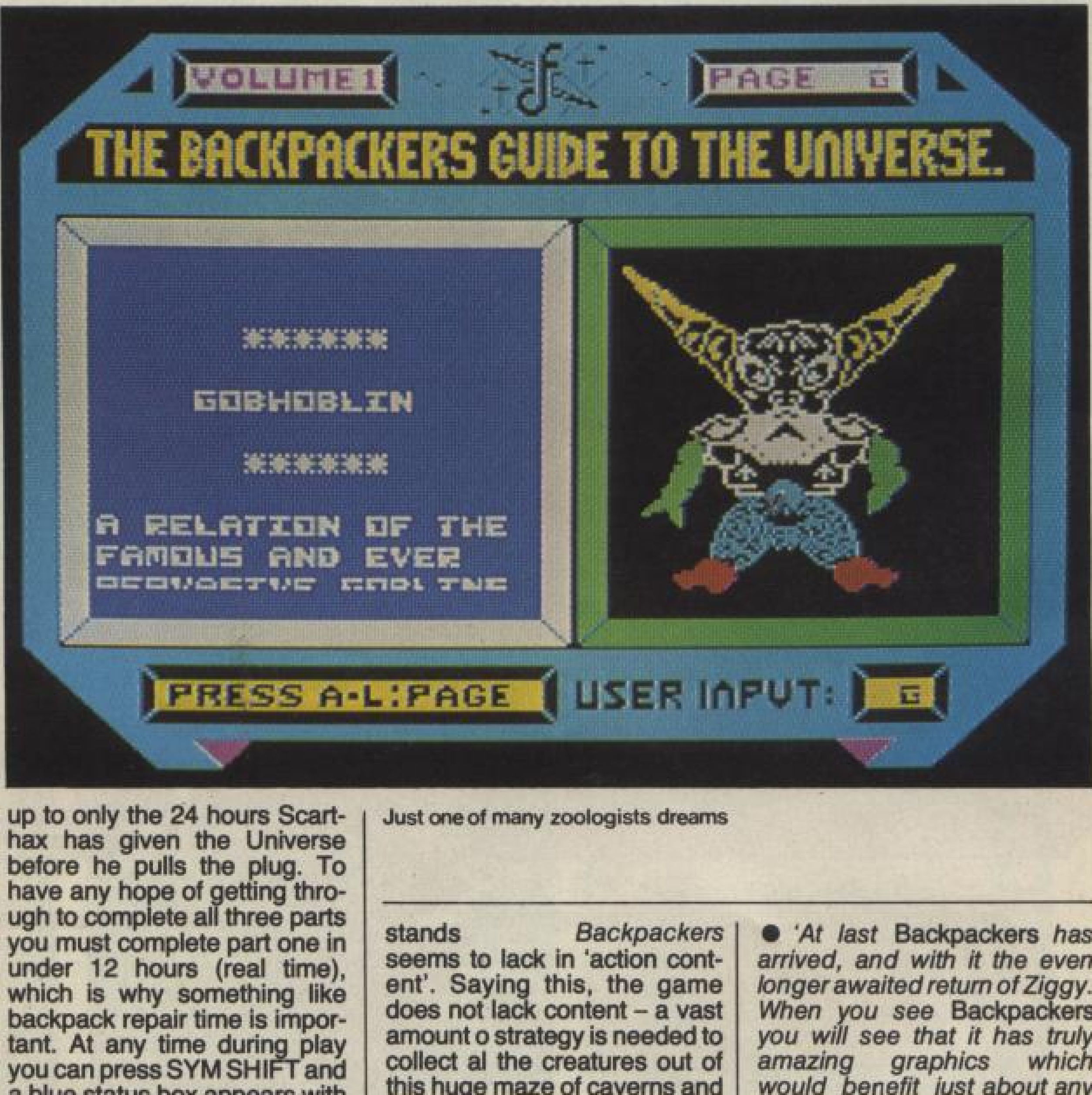
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BBC MICRO B: BIRD STRIKE · GOLD DIGGER · ACID DROPS · DUCK! · ESTRA · THE HACKER.

BACKPACKERS GUIDE
To The Universe (Part 1)

Producer: **Fantasy Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Bob Hamilton**

In collating this review the office was full of odd sounding comments like, 'What's a Googly Bird like to do?'
Reply: 'Sleep mostly –with it, because Fluffels lick everything to death.'
There was a time when army commanders were cautioned to make sure their men looked after their feet properly and everything else would be okay. That was in the days when men marched everywhere. The old caution is a good pointer to playing *Backpackers Guide to the Universe*, because in Part 1, your main task is to collect a hit squad of wierd aliens who have been isolated in cages on the Planet of Exile, in order to go up against the egregious Scarthax who is threatening to pull the Great Plug of the Universe.
Fantasy's favourite hero Ziggy is back in the saddle – or to be more accurate – in the harness of his backpack. The backpack is quite a marvellous invention *(see the October issue of CRASH for more details!)*, which is capable of holding all the various wierdos that Ziggy frees. The problem is knowing what also to collect to both feed them and keep them happy so that they won't die of heartbreak or become a meal for some other creature.
To help you in your nursemaiding task is the Backpackers Guide which is located on the reverse side of the cassette from the actual game. This colourful device will introduce you to the creatures and their needs. Ziggy's backpack also allows hi to fly about, but it uses up more energy than walking, as does use of the flamethrower which deflects the wraiths that flit about the planet's caverns. Contact with the wraiths also depletes energy. When the energy runs too low you will be beamed back to the main capsule and repair time is added onto your overall playing time. This is the interesting facet of *Backpackers*. The three projected parts must add up to only the 24 hours Scarthax has given the Universe before he pulls the plug. To have any hope of getting through to complete all three parts you must complete part one in under 12 hours (real time), which is why something like backpack repair time is important. At any time during play you can press SYM SHIFT and a blue status box appears with scrolling information. This informs you of amount of backpack damage and interesting details like how your creatures are doing.
Backpackers Guide to the Universe Part One is played in a giant complex of caverns, a large maze, in which keys and useful objects constitute a large adventure and strategy element.



Just one of many zoologists dreams

CRITICISM

● 'Having previously seen a preview of the program I had high expectations of the game. Now, at this present moment, playing the game it gradually became apparent that my expectations were set too high. Graphics are very bright, detailed and imaginative, but nothing really seems to move other than the wraiths, which is a great pity for this game. As time goes by it would have been more fun if the wraiths had developed into more evil and deadly enemies and changed from their fluffy look to a more aggressive look. As it stands *Backpackers* seems to lack 'action content'. Saying this, the game does not lack content – a vast amount o strategy is needed to collect al the creatures out of this huge maze of caverns and to keep them all alive. This where the marvellous *Backpackers Guide* comes into its own and provides many hours of enjoyment just reading what creatures are, what they like and what they dislike. Ziggy, my favourite super hero since *Pyramid* was brought out, now has this wonderful backpack – it's marvellous what this device is capable of doing. When Ziggy flies, he moves very quickly, accuately and it's fun to control him when he's doing so. Walking is a different matter – why has my favourite super hero got such spindley insignificant legs? They don't seem to be very well animated either. I'm sure his thin pegs are the reason why he doesn't walk very quickly (probably because thy are so weak). This game has many good points and will probably provide many hours of enjoyment in strategically capturing, feeding and nursing this planet's wierd but wonderful creatures and taking them back to your space capsule. Other than this though, there desn't seem to be a great deal of addictive qualities.'

● *'At last* Backpackers *has arrived, and with it the even longer awaited return of Ziggy. When you see* Backpackers *you will see that it has truly amazing graphics which would benefit just about any game!* Backpackers *has the ingredients for a really great game, b graphics(no sound though), Ziggy, a brilliant plot and not forgetting the wierd and wonderful creatures which inhabit the Caverns of Exile. But sadly, the game didn't relly grab me. I don't know why but I just didn't find enough action in the game to keep me compelled for'long. But with that said, it's still an enjoyable program which I'm sure many will like. On the B side of the tape is the Guide which Imust say is a delight to read and it provides vital information on the conservation of*


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ASTRONUT

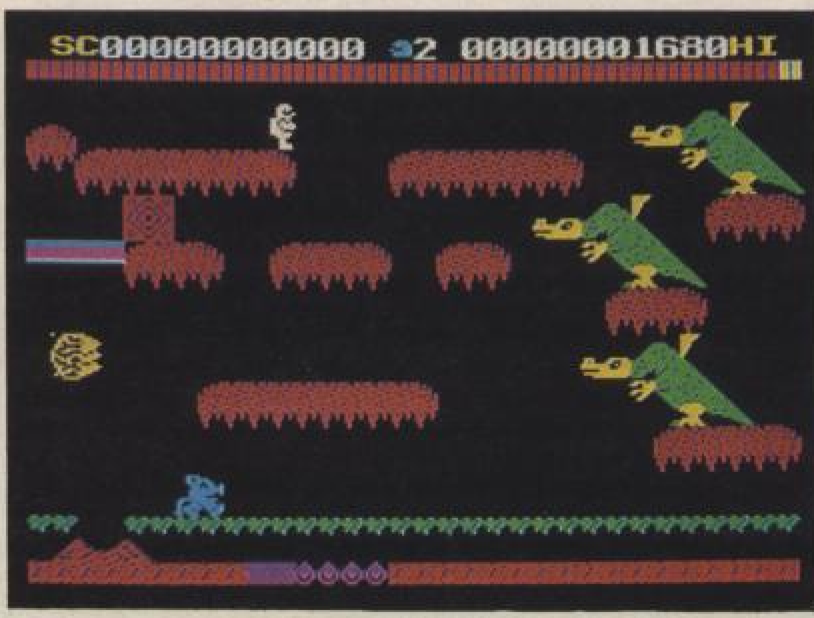
Producer: **Software Projects**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Patrick Richmond**

Underneath one more of Software Projects lively inlay covers is a colour entry code card and THE STORY: After weeks of waiting the Space Freighter has nearly reached your settlement on Planet CS – but disaster. . .

A sudden meteor shower has devastated the ship, and its cargo of Resource Blocks has been scattered over the planet. The people have elected you to journey outside the settlement and round up the Blocks. Unfortunately this is unexplored terrain and there are many dangers – naturally.

In fact there are 15 varying screens in what is basically a novel platform game with very simple control keys. At the base there is the flashing transporter base onto which the Resource Blocks (three per screen) must be pushed. These blocks appear in awkward places on the screen and Astronut moves them by pushing against them until they fall from one level to the next one down and so on until they can be pushed onto the transporter block, at which poin the next one appears somewhere. Volcanoes or stairs automatically whisk Astronut upwards and he may jump down from any height. Various aliens waft about causing mayhem, but Astronut may leave behind bombs to destroy them, although the bombs have a time delay on them.

Any of the 15 screens may be entered at the start of a game by the select menu, and each of these is quite different from any of the others, with its own distinct problems.



You'll have to box clever on this one

CRITICISM

● *'Astronut* lives up to Software Projects' standards. It has some excellent graphics (and imaginative ones). The game itself is very playable and has that magical addictive quality about it. Not *MM* or *JSW* but it is still excellent (in some ways even better, like the bigger, more colourful graphics). Another winner from Software Projects. (It's a pity the screens don't have names – a competition perhaps?'



Knock knock, what's there

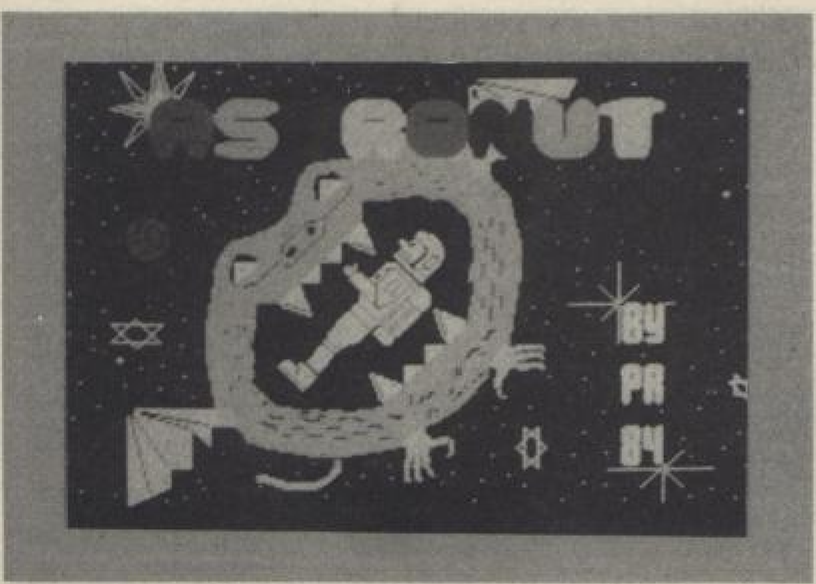
your animals after you have freed them from their cages. I mean how else would you know that you feed Urks on teabags an that the Fluffelump is a blood sucker (it looks quite cute actually). Overall Backpackers *is a fun program but it had limited appeal for me.'*

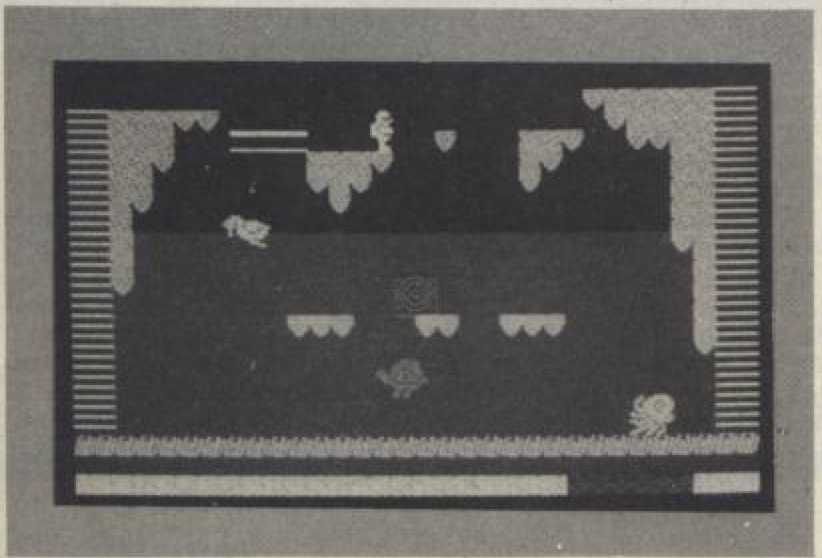
● 'Here is a game that will appeal to those who enjoy adventure and strategy games and want an arcade game that isn't too demanding on reaction skills. It's true that you have to be able to avoid the wraiths, but the real skill in *Backpackers* lies in collecting the creatures from their cages and discovering the useful items that help to keep them alive, as well as coping with the other useful objects that help you in your quest. These include keys which allow you to withdraw some of the stalectites and stalegmites and ind shortcuts. All this is done to a background or wit and humour and marvellous graphics. Ziggy flies very well, although the animation on his walking about is a little thin. With the second and third parts yet to come, *Backpackers* should prove to be a big hit and a very involving game,'

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Q/A up/down, bottom row to fire (when flying) and to pick up (when walking), BREAK to beam back to capsule, SYM SHIFT for status report
Joystick: Sinclair 2, Protek, AGF, Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive and well laid out
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: excellent, imaginative and varied
Sound: none
Skill levels: 1
Lives: N/A
Screens: not known, but loads
Special features: game on side 1, guide on side 2 of the tape
General rating: perhaps lacking on the action side, otherwise an original and excellent program.

Use of computer	82%
Graphics	87%
Playability	81%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	80%
Overall	83%





● 'Astronut *is one of those magical games that looks simple to play and indeed is simple to play but difficult to get through! The combination of volcanoes which whoosh you up but only at a given second, and the opening/closing platforms that get in the way, often stopping you half way up when you wanted to go all the way up, makes for a very jolly game with plenty of addictivity. It's a pity that Software Projects forgot all the instructions to tell you the keys, they're neither on screen nor the inlay. The level select menu says to use Z and X, which indicates those kes for left and right, but I spent a while looking for up and down before realising they weren't needed, and did a lot of dying before I realised you could drop bombs. Still, an excellent game.'*

● 'The first thing that really strikes you about *Astronut* is the lack of instruction. Well, after sorting out the key problem I could start playing *Astronut* which is similar in appearance to *JSW* but plays in a way similar to a 'Pengo' game. I quite enjoyed playing this one which is both challenging and fun and has quite a few screens to keep you happy for a while. Overall *Astronut* is a standard platform game, graphically very good and a good game generally.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: not stated anywhere, but they are Z/X left/right and ENTER to drop time bomb
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: very simple, and responsive
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: very good, varied and detailed
Sound: continuous, but with on/off facility (Q)
Skill levels: only 1 but each screen has a different problem
Lives: 3
Screens: 15
General rating: very good to excellent, addictive and playable.

Use of computer	**80%**
Graphics	**87%**
Playability	**84%**
Getting started	**66%**
Addictive qualities	**83%**
Value for money	**84%**
Overall	**81%**

LODE RUNNER

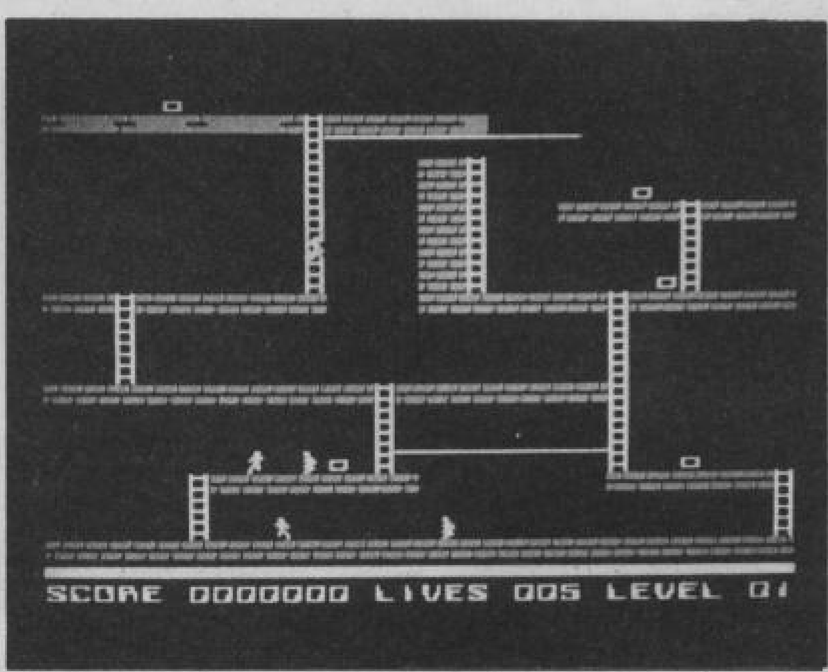
Producer: **Software Projects**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**

You are a highly trained Galactic Commando deep in enemy territory. Power hungry leaders of the repressive Bungeling Empire have stolen a fortune in gold from the peace loving people, and you have just discovered their underground treasury. Your aim in life is to recover every single ingot.

So Software Proj describe this manic arcade game with over 150 different screens, and a customising facility for you to design your own screens and save them to tape.

In fact, what we have here is a mammoth 'Panic' style game where the traditional digging function is actually an important part of the overall strategy. The screens are made up of numerous variations on the theme of brick blocks, ladders and bars, with the gold stacked here and there, often in seemingly inaccessible places. The Bugeling agents swarm all over the place after you, with one disadvantage – they can't leap up large blocks –but then, neither can you. What you can do is dig holes for them to fall into, out of which they spring after a few seconds. You can dig holes to get at the inaccessible gold too, and the longest possible fall does not kill you off.

A nasty touch is that the holes heal themselves after a while, and as you can't jump out of them like the nasties, you get concretised in! This factor is important on screens where the gold is deeply buried under brick, as you can only dig a hole through a layer if there is more than one block missing on the layer above it. This means having to dig out several blocks length in order to have the room to dig downwards for three or four



blocks. Meanwhile they are filling in above you and the nasties are leaping down on top of you.

Because of the huge number of screens, there are 75 on one side of the tape and 75 on the second side. Access to any playing screen is available – they don't expect you to wade through all of them to complete the game!

CRITICISM

● *'Lode Runner* is evidence that you don't need mega graphics to make a great game, just a good idea. All of the graphics in this game are small, one character size, and don't have all sorts of decoration. But the game is great fun to play. It has a high



POTTY PIGEON

Producer: **Gremlin Graphics**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **S. Hollingworth**

This is Gremlin Graphic's Spectrum follow up to *Monty Mole*. Originally released first on the CBM64, *Potty Pigeon* on the Spectrum is quite a different game and in a way more complex. The pigeon owns a nest in a tree with three ever-hungry chicks in it. What they want is worms and loads of them. Here and there across the linked screens there are wiggly worms sticking their silly heads up above ground. Potty has to go around and collect them, one at a time, and fly them back to the nest. This costs him a lot of energy, which is replenished by catching the mayflies, not an easy task as they dart about. Although if he walks his energy level also goes up

Life would be just too easy for Potty if it weren't for those little hazards that make life interesting. In this case these include a busy helicopter, snap dragons, frogs, angry red birds, spiders and cars on the road in some screens (it was the cars that made up all of the CBM64 version). The landscape itself also poses problems as objects cut up the playing space, forcing Potty to fly dangerously close to some hazards. His sole means of defence is a natural function which pigeons have a habbit of using all the while. It stuns the nasty for a few moments!

CRITICISM

● *'Monty Mole* was hard to follow, *Potty Pigeon* is a good game but not in the super league! Generally the graphics are good, but are not all that exciting. The collecting theme here is not a new idea – it is alright but not very addictive. *Potty Pigeon* will not be remembered as much as *Monty Mole*, once a standard is set it has to be kept up to. Good but uninspiring. '

● 'Potty Pigeon *is similar to the CBM64 version in name only. Feeding your chicks is no easy feat. The first load of screens are simple but on later levels it really gets hard. The graphics are good, though some of them are a bit small. The game itself is extreme fun to play and produces many thoughts such as, 'I've got to do better next time. '* Potty Pigeon *is a worthy successor to* Monty Mole *and I'm sure many people will like it enormously. Overall, it offers a good challenge to games players of all sorts and it's worth having in your Christmas stocking. '*

● *'Potty Pigeon* is a novel but simple idea, just collecting worms. it couldn't be easier could it, except for avoiding the odd helicopter, hawks, triffids and cars – even frogs are dangerous, but then again, it's all in the every day life of Potty the pigeon. Sounds thrilling, well I can assure you it gets very tiresome, repetetive and

strategic element in determining the best way to get the goodies and escape. I found it both playable and addictive. the men, although smooth, moved nicely, running, jumping, climbing and swinging in true commando style. An edit and save facility is provided so you can invent your own situations when you are fed up with the 150 screens already there.'

● *'A game to be dismissed, is a proabable first thought on seeing* Lode Runner, *because the graphics look small and old fashioned. But don't be misled. A closer examination reveals that the one character-sized men are beautifully animated and extremely characterful as well. This is another of those 'modern' arcade oldies given a new lease of life with clever thinking, which piles incident on top of incident untill a completely new game emerges from it. It's simple game in playing concept, but difficult and challenging in execution. Fun and highly addictive, especially with so many screens to play,* Lode Runner *is a great game. Get it!'*

● 'First impressions of this game is that it is going to be a crummy platform game, because the size of the characters is tiny. One then realises that each individual character, though only 8 pixels high, is quite detailed and fairly well animated, quite neat indeed. Screen layout is big, to say the least, mind you, it is an assault course. Usage of the screen space is excellent. While playing the game, it becomes apparent that collecting gold ingots isn't as easy as it seems. A considerable amount of forward planning is needed, especially on the higher screens when there seem to be hundreds of storm troopers after you – amazing! There is something, I don't quite know what it is, that attracted me to this game and I think it will have a long lasting appeal. Whilst you progress through the many screens, a useful item (known as spare lives) is incremented with every screen you clear, so that on level 5 you have 9 lives, and I can assure you, you really do need 9 lives. A much more complex game than first meets the eye, but usually these are the types that attract people into buying them, because they will have such a long lasting appeal. Another original idea that uses some previously tested graphics, ie. platforms.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable, preset are: Q/Z up/down, I/P left/right, N to dig holes
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: highly responsive
Use of colour: simple on the whole, but very good
Graphics: small, mean as hell and well animated
Sound: not much, but doesn't spoil the game
Skill levels: 1, but it seems to get more difficult as you go along
Lives: 4 to kick off with
Screens: 150
Special features: you can design your own screens via the editor and save them to tape
General rating: a very good game, with plenty of playability and addictive qualities.



Use of computer	81%
Graphics	68%
Playability	83%
Getting started	84%
Addictive qualities	80%
Value for money	87%
Overall	**81%**



boring, and quite often frustrating. Frustrating for the simple fact that for no reason whatsoever, every now and again, you lose you hard-earned worm. Graphics are quite pretty, colourful and detailed, but I can't really say that there is a terrible amount actually moving and going on to keep you interested. They say it's the early bird that gets the worm, but sometimes it's the early bird that gets the bullet – in the back.'

COMMENTS

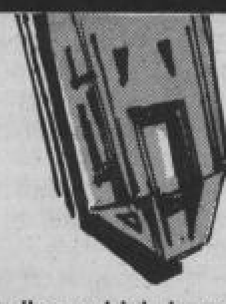
Control keys: Q/W left/right, P/L up/down, N to SYM SHIFT to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: responsive, well laid out
Use of colour: good
Graphics: quite good, smooth and detailed
Sound: above average
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 11
General rating: good, but varied opinions from reviewers.

Use of computer	72%
Graphics	77%
Playability	69%
Getting started	73%
Addictive qualities	63%
Value for money	63%
Overall	**70%**

THERBO

Producer: **Arcade Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Bruce Rutherford**





Therbo (an alternative to war) is the name of a game, as is 'cricket' or 'football'. In fact 'Therbo' stands for *thermal ballistic object* with which the game is played, as a football is used in soccer. Consequently *Therbo* can claim to be the first computer simulation of a fántasy game –although being a fictional game, this does not look anything like a simulation in normal terms, but is in fact a genuine arcade oddity.
The scenario is set in the latter part of the 21st century, when America and Russia initially proposed the concept and finalised therules governing the playing of the game. It was agreed that the winners of the conflict gain control of the opponent's land and that the game should be played, for safety reasons, on the moon. Whilst the track was cut on the lunar surface, the design of the weapons was perfected.
Your opponent is the computer, and is designated as the home team. The Therbo track in some senses resembles one of those huge particle accelerators. Thescreen display looks down frm on top and shows both walls of the track, scrolling left or right (depending on which tem has control of the therbo) from the start point to the goal mouth. The therbo basically travels down the centre of the track and to gain control of it, it must be knocked into 'touch', or the side walls of the track. This is done by firing thrusters. These are situated at regular intervals along the sides ofthe track and they fire a bolt diagonally upwards or downwards. When a bolt hits the therbo, it knocks it one nudge inthe direction of fire. Each team has control of its own thrusters. The team in possession of the therbo may use their thrusters to keep the therbo in play, while the opponents use theirs to knock it out of play.
Another weapon is the Mesmo, which destroys the therbo outright, bu this function may only be used three times in any game. THERE ARE ALSO Polarity Missiles, which home in on the therbo and will destroy it after a set period of time. But it is possible for the therbo to fire charges at the missiles, either negative or positive, and if you guess the polarity of the missile and send out a charge of the opposite polarity, then the missile will be destroyed.
There are two stages to each game. In the first stage the team controlling the therbo also have a tank which travels along wih the therbo. The tank is used to destroy shapes that move across the screen by firing at them. The tank uses up fuel, bu there is a large circular refuelling ship which moves randomly abut the screen. Running the tank over it will replenish fuel. In the second stage itis a straight run for the goal and everything except the therbo disappears. But the goal will be disallowed if your tank has not destroyed a set amount of shapes thus scoring the necessary points to enter the second stage.
The game lasts for nine minutes initially, but if you want more time you can select an extra thee minutes once, and only within the last three minutes of the game.

CRITICISM

● *'Therbo* (no I haven't caught a cold), is the first thing I've seen frm Arcade for some time. AT FIRST I thought it was just a confusing mixed up sort of game. After a lot of playing I proved myself very wrong indeed. Glactic football best describes it, ith you trying to protect the ball, sorry, thermal ballistic object, and score. This alternative to war is a refreshingly original game which becomes addictive after practice. The graphics are smooth and 'practical', any more complex and they may have swamped this game. If you gave it a quick play in the shops yo would probably leave it there; it is the sort of game that grows on you as your skills improve – a factor which is reflected in my 'getting started' rating.'

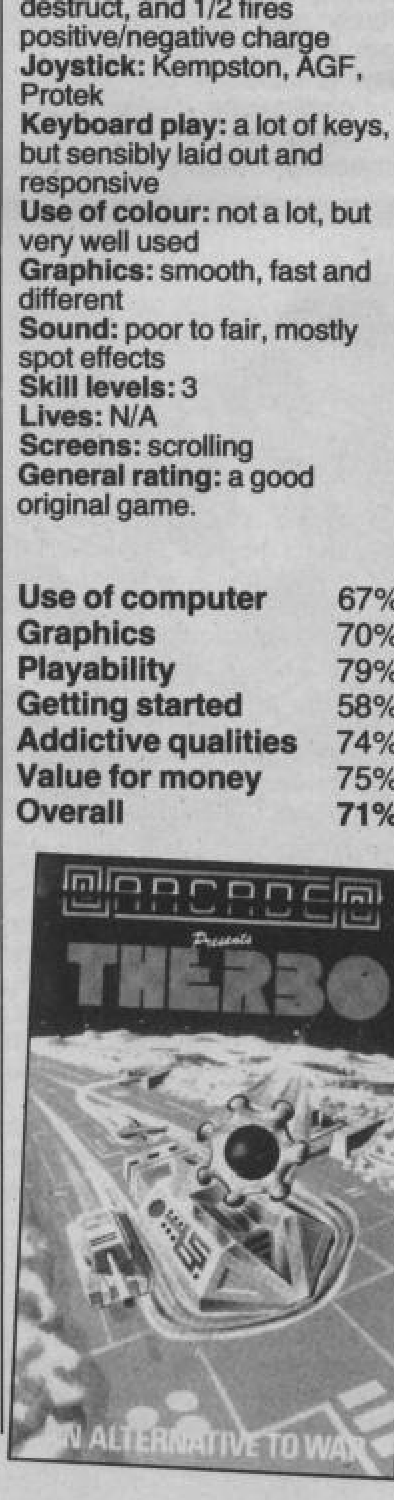
● *'This game took me ages to get the hang of. It is very difficult to grasp the ideal* objectives. The instructions do try to make everything clear but just don't really cope with it all. The graphics are clear and move very quickly about the screen. Colour is well used with no apparent attribute problems, with the sound being mainly spot effects, but at least meaningful ones. I think Therbo *may appeal to quite a few people and although it is difficult to grasp the idea initially, it is well worth the effort. A good game tht lacks a little for me in addictive qualities – strange and different.'*

● 'I suppose if you had to describe how to play cricket or football in about 500 words to people who had never heard of either game, you would also have difficulty getting all the subtleties across. A pity, because many people might put *Therbo* down before giving it a chance. It is a simple idea that is rich in playability once the objectives have been thoroughly understood. There are a daunting number of keys to play with, but not all of them are needed at the same time. The first stage of each goal run is quite chllenging with a four directional tank to control and fire from, keping an eye on the targets, the ast depleted fuel supply and the essential fuel tanker (which darts about all over the place) and watching out that the computer doesn't knock yor therbo out of play while al this is going on. The graphics are 'different' looking, effective and fast, and the result is an original, playable and ultimately addictive game which I enjoyed and will come back to.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A tank up/down, O/P tank left/right and Ø to fire, W/S fires thrusters up/down, I fires polarity missiles, M for Mesmo destruct, and 1/2 fires positive/negative charge
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek
Keyboard play: a lot of keys, but sensibly laid out and responsive
Use of colour: not a lot, but very well used
Graphics: smooth, fast and different
Sound: poor to fair, mostly spot effects
Skill levels: 3
Lives: N/A
Screens: scrolling
General rating: a good original game.

Use of computer	67%
Graphics	70%
Playability	79%
Getting started	58%
Addictive qualities	74%
Value for money	75%
Overall	**71%**




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As the first fully hardware programmed joystick interface, this product has become well established over the past year and will accept ALL standard joysticks or trackballs, including Quickshot II with 'rapid fire', for use with ALL Spectrum or ZX81 software — not just those with a joystick option.

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INTERFACE II

The AGF Interface II represents the best low cost introduction to joystick control.

The 'AGF' control standard is now offered by over 100 games or utility programs for use with any joystick or trackball.

Any game which is controlled by the cursor movement keys (5,6,7,8) or has a Protek option is also compatible with Interface II.

A rear connector allows other peripherals to be connected at the same time.

This product is available for either the Spectrum or ZX81, is supplied with full instructions, a 12 month guarantee, and a 12½% discount voucher against further AGF mail-order purchases.

ROMSLOT

The new AGF RomSlot is designed for anyone who already owns a programmable joystick interface, or prefers to use the keyboard to control games, and would like to add the facility of ROM cartridge software to their system.

RomSlot will accept the Sinclair range of instant loading games and will also be compatible with the new releases from Parker Software — exciting new games only to be available in ROM format.

This system allows instant play. Your computer memory size is not important and you will be able to play games that could ordinarily require more RAM.

RomSlot incorporates an extra feature called 'Restart'. This allows you to instantly *restart* the ROM game.

RomSlot is guaranteed for 12 months and has a full width expansion connector to accept joystick interfaces, speech units and printers etc.

QUICKSHOT

The Quickshot joystick is an excellent value game controller incorporating suction cups for sure-footed precision with a comfortably contoured handle offering a convenient top firing button as well as one on the base.

QUICKSHOT II

Quickshot II has improved styling with a trigger type firing button as well as the top firing action, with a broader base for greater suction stability.

It also has a unique 'Auto-Fire' facility which at the flick of a switch provides a constant rapid firing action simulating a fast trigger finger.

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AGF Interface II	£ 9.95+£0.50 p&p	☐
Quickshot II Joystick	£10.50+£0.50 p&p	☐
Quickshot Joystick	£ 7.95+£0.50 p&p	☐
Extra 'CustomCards' (5 per pack	£ 3.95 inc. p&p	☐
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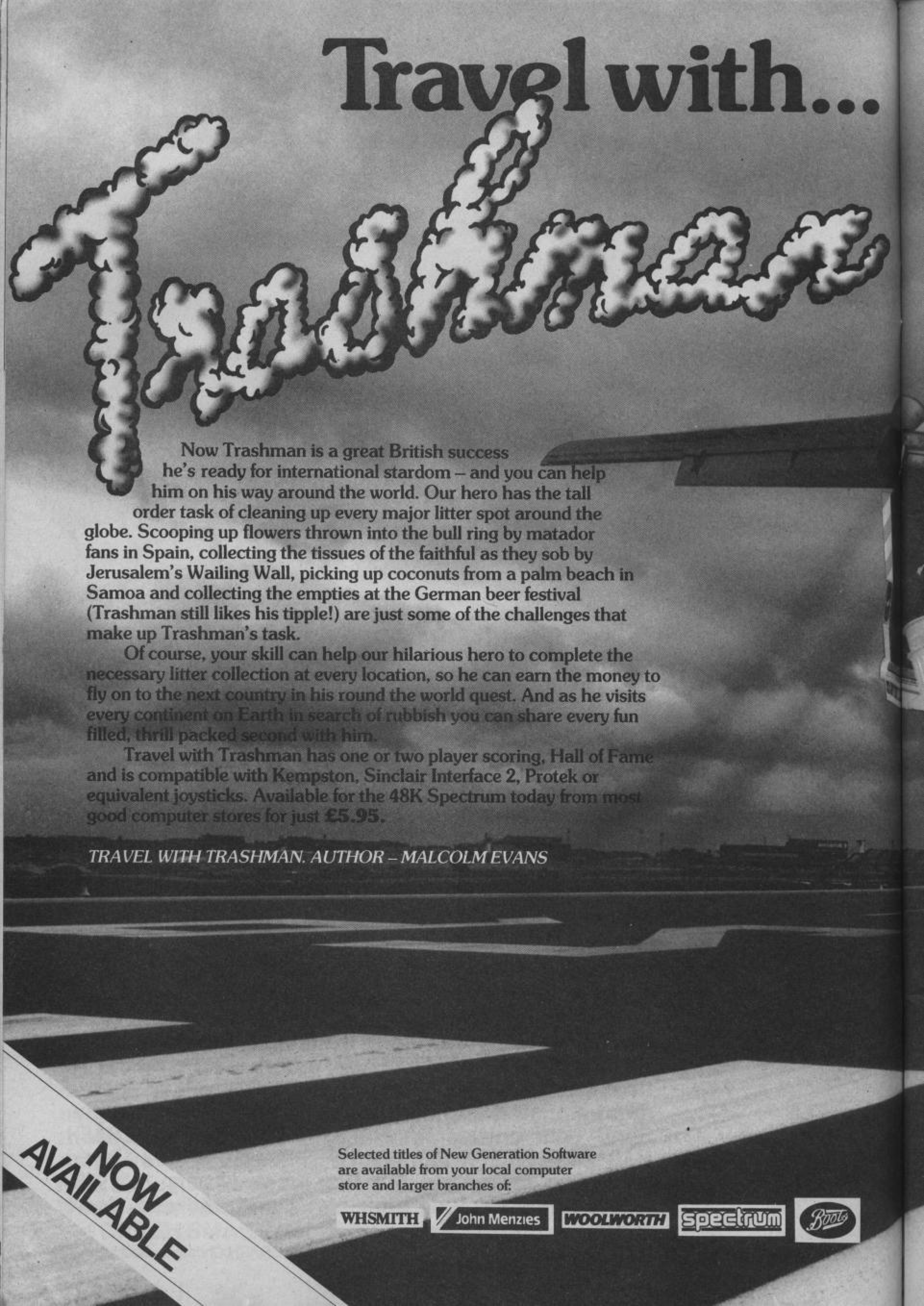
FIREBIRD are offering a Microdrive Expansion Kit valued at £90 to the winner of this competition, and for the runners-up there are five complete sets of FIREBIRD software for the Spectrum. The titles include *Run Baby Run*, *Exodus*, *Viking Raiders*, *Terra Force*, *Menace*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Mr Freeze*, *Crazy Caverns*, *Byte Bitten*, and the CRASH SMASH *Booty*. Ten games in all.

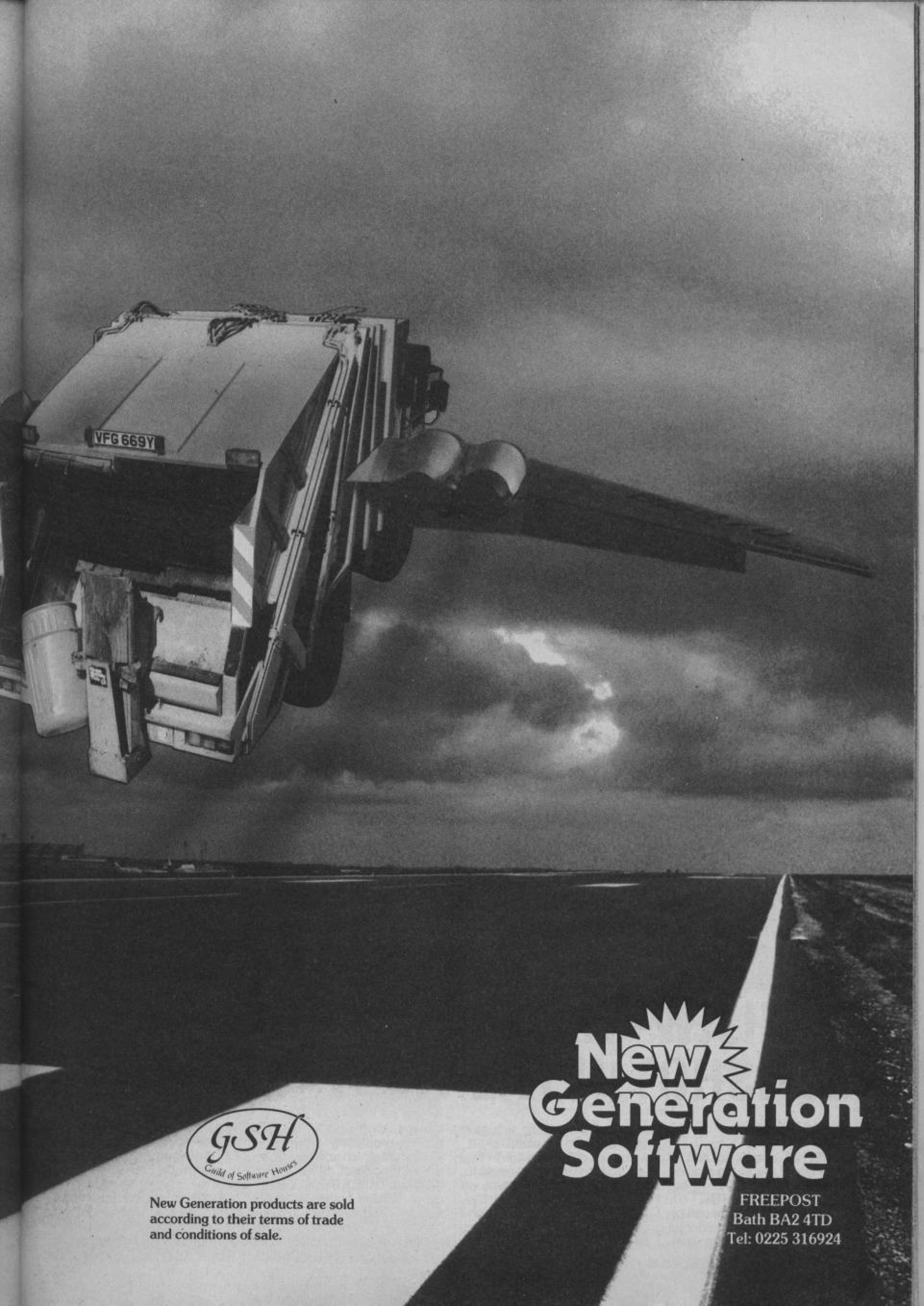
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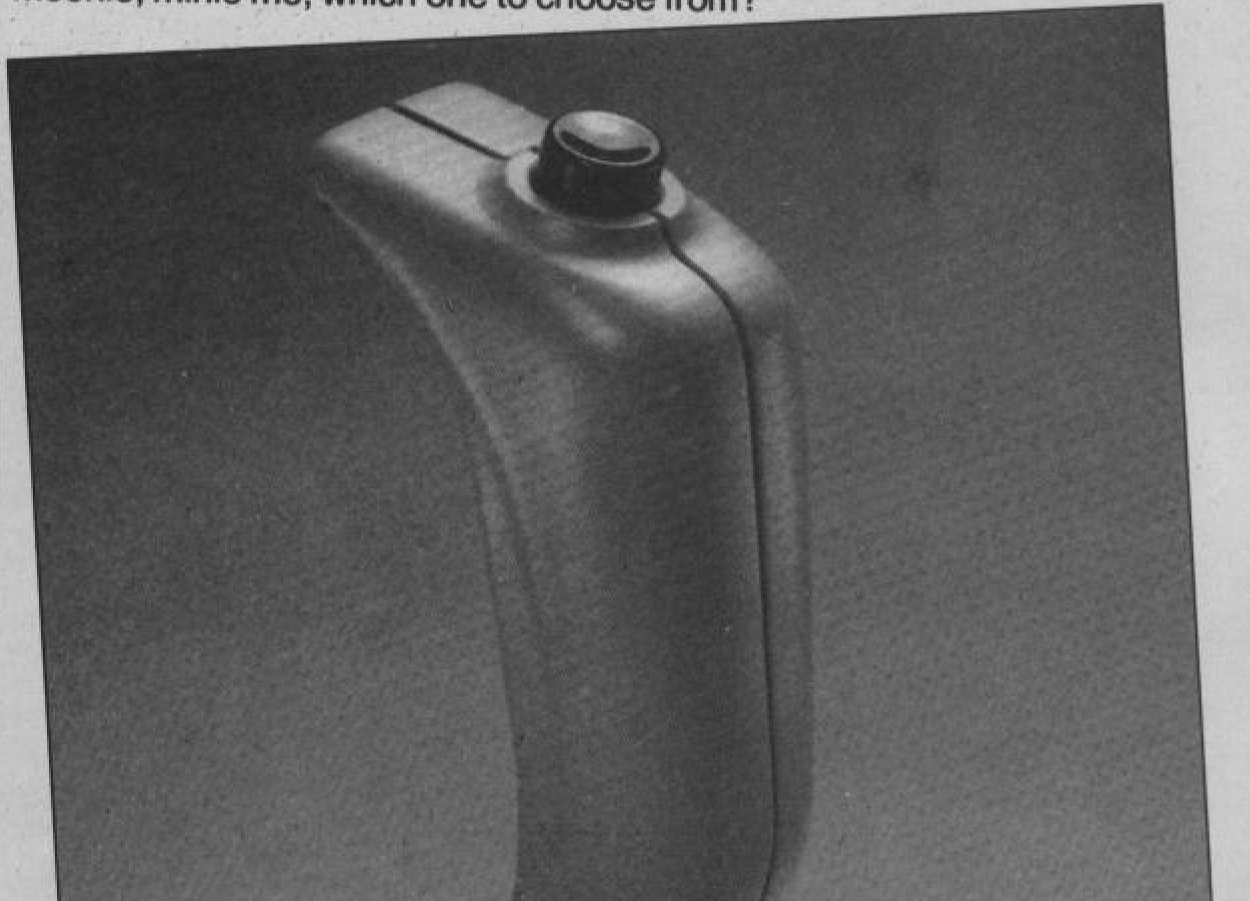


To be amongst the winners all you have to do is construct a humorous sentence or short paragraph of no more than 100 words along the lines of the star letter in this month's CRASH FORUM, incorporating all the 10 titles from the FIREBIRD range. CRASH will select the most amusing and distribute the prizes accordingly. Send your entries to: FIREBIRD COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB to aarive no later than the first post January 18 1985. Entries must include your name and address, don't forget!


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Of course, your skill can help our hilarious hero to complete the necessary litter collection at every location, so he can earn the money to fly on to the next country in his round the world quest. And as he visits every continent on Earth in search of rubbish you can share every fun filled, thrill packed second with him.
Travel with Trashman has one or two player scoring, Hall of Fame and is compatible with Kempston, Sinclair Interface 2, Protek or equivalent joysticks. Available for the 48K Spectrum today from most good computer stores for just £5.95.
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VULCAN, who have been distributing amongst other things the **SPECTRAVIDEO QUICKSHOT 1** and **QUICKSHOT 2**, have now released the **GUNSHOT** joystick, which seems to be a synthesis between the two **QUICKSHOTS**. The marked difference lies in the cream and grey colour of the unit, which is either to distinguish it from the other two offerings or to give it a MSX or Commodore family resemblance. Eenie, meenie, minie mo, which one to choose from?



GUNLAW–THE GREATEST GUNSHOT IN THE WEST

CONSTRUCTION

GUNSHOT seems at first to come out of the same moulds as the **QUICKSHOT 1**, but there are quite a few differences. On the inside can be found the usual star contact arrangement which is activated by the plastic actuator ring integral to the plastic shaft. A marked difference lies in the fact that the ring is not made to flex as usual with this type of design, so a more solid feel should be noted on actuation. The plastic shaft is suspended by a spherical support in the top moulding and by a stiff spring protruding from the lever shaft which acts as a flexible bearing shaft, all very similar to the **QUICKSHOT 2**. The common star makes contact with four nickel-plated screwheads, which are mounted on turrets and hold the solder tags fitted to the wire ends of the cable. The lever handle incorporates a moulded grip and looks like an inverted **QUICKSHOT 1** lever. A round thumb-activated fire button is positioned in such a way that the palm of the hand comes to rest on the joystick enclosure, stabilising the joystick for one-hand operation. A further round fire button is available at 10 o'clock in the main body of the unit and is for right-handers only. Both fire buttons actuate dome switches mounted on small pcb's. The body-mounted fire button pcb has provision for an **AUTOFIRE** option, but the review model **(CL-123)**did not have this feature and the switch opening is covered by the manufacturer's label. The cable is the usual unit incorporating an integrally molded D connector (**ATARI**compatible pin-out) and retaining grommet. Four large suction cups provide stability for one hand operation (provided there are no crumbs on the table!).

IN ACTION

The stick action is what one has come to expect with this type of construction. There is a fairly short and loose travel with poor centering action, but this allows on the other hand for pretty fast 'edging' on some games. With the combination of short throw and poor centering it is quite easy to do diagonal moves by mistake. The **GUNSHOT** isn't ideal for handheld use due to its great width but it comes into its own when 'suctioned' to the table. The unit is solidly constructed and withstands the usual vandalism when playing **DECATHLON** type games.

CONCLUSION

GUNSHOT fits into the lowest price category of joysticks and feels like an improved and certainly more rugged version of the QUICKSHOT 1 joystick.
It does not have the trigger fire action of the QUICKSHOT 2 and obviously does not include the AUTOFIRE facility as standard.
The familiarity of the design is apparent and given the kind of technique used the quality of action is pretty much the same compared to its competition. At £7.95 this is obviously a good first buy.

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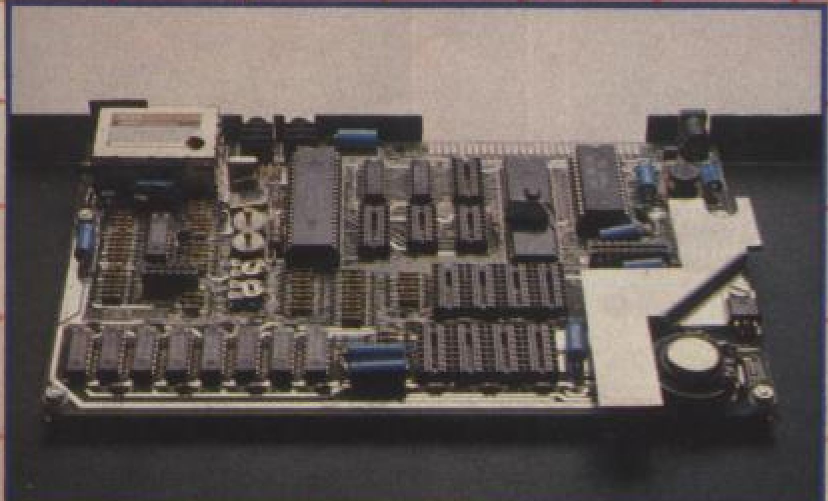


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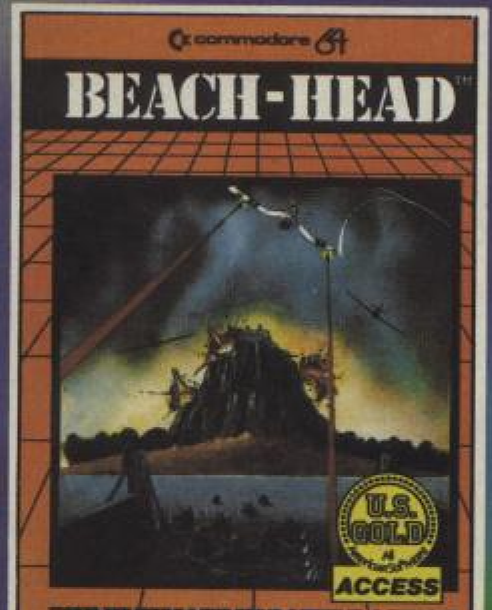
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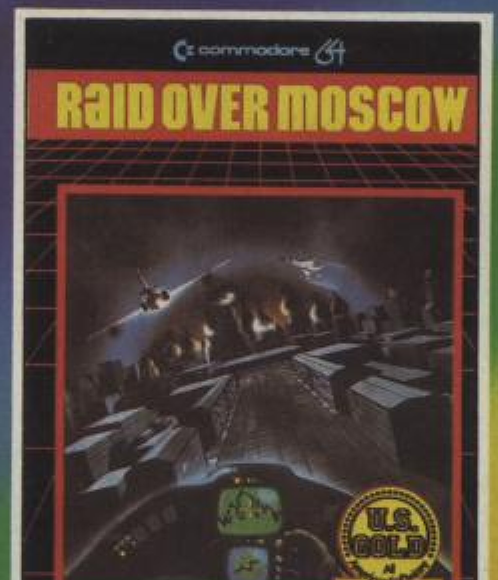
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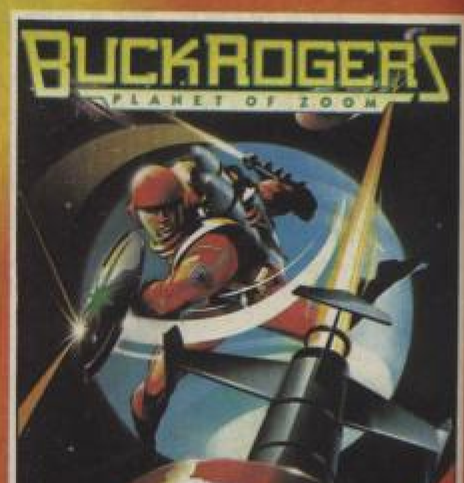
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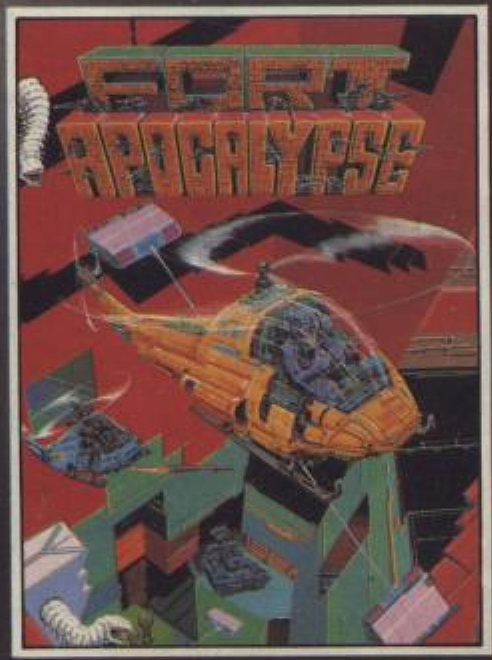
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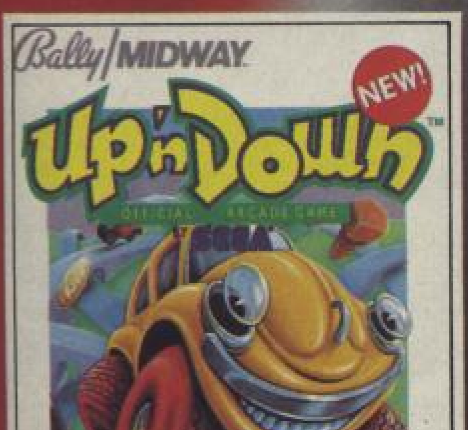
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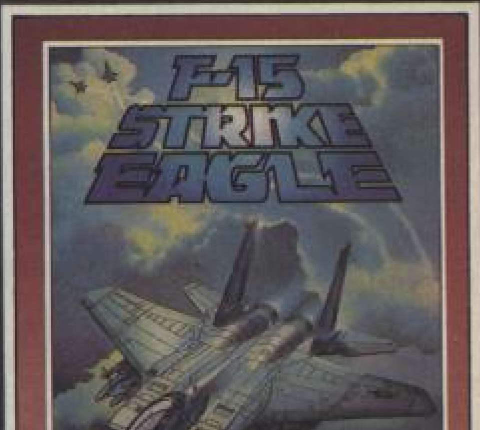
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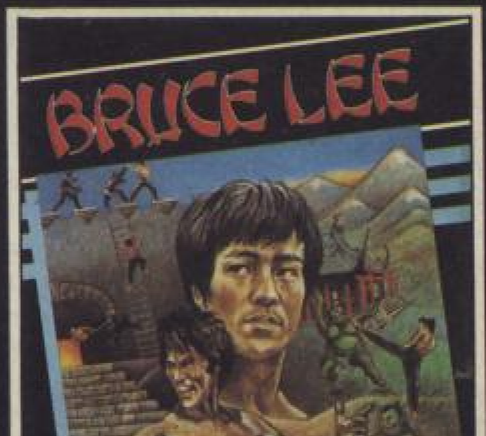
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Crash Competition

WIN A STARSTRIKE FROM REALTIME

AND PLUNGE INTO THE TRENCH OF D

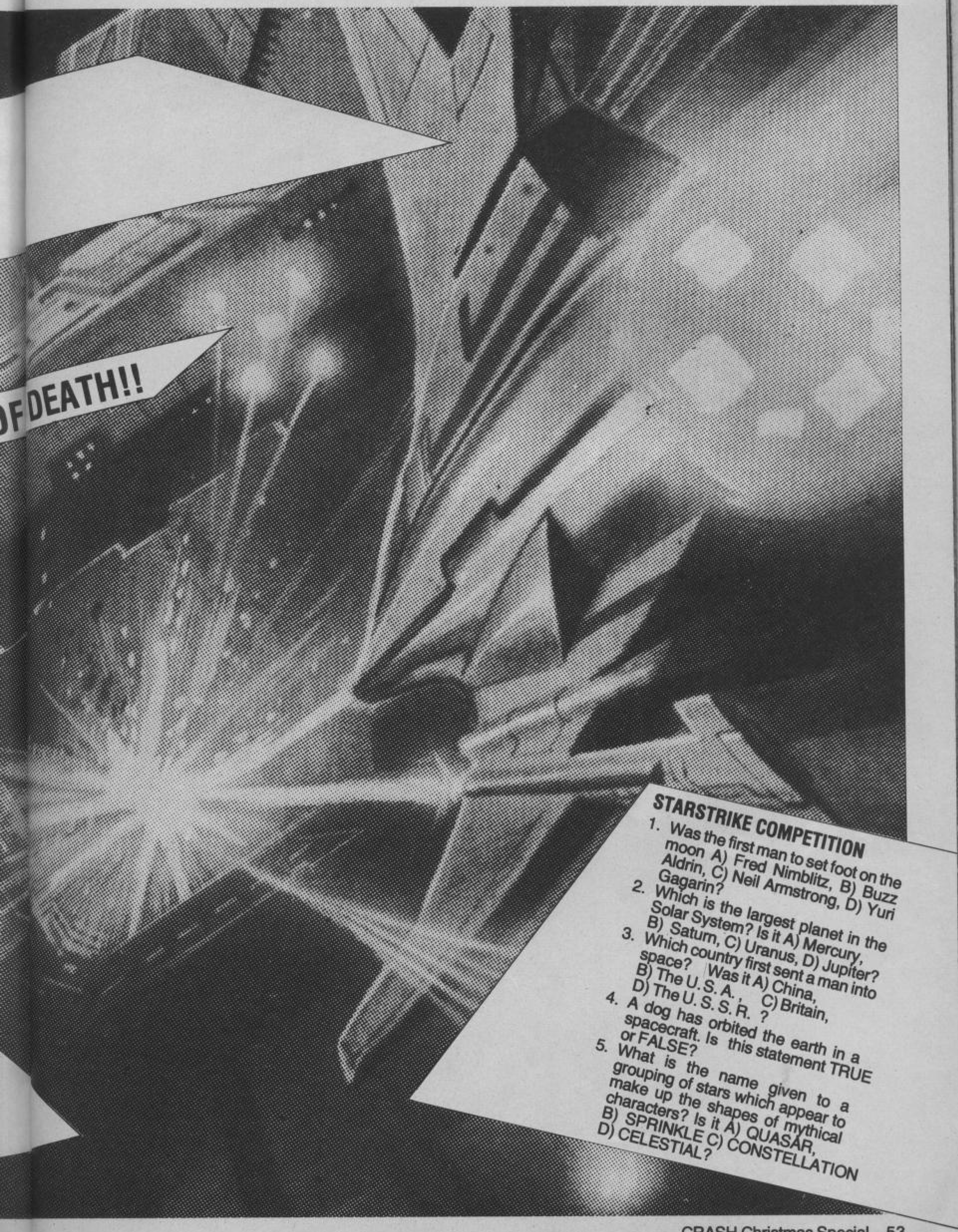
100 STARSTRIKES MUST BE WON!!

Starstrike by **Realtime** was a CRASH Smash in the December issue. It follows in the wake of their highly popular *Tank Duel* and is an exciting 3D game set in space. The graphics are colourful (unusual in wire frame games) and convincing. This is perhaps the closest yet that micro games have come to imitating the classic cinema offering *Star Wars*

The game involves you in firing twin lasers from your space craft at attacking aliens who hurl plasma bolts at you. There are three different screens with numerous levels of difficulty in space, on the surface of the battle star and down in the 'equatorial trench', which contains a protective force field through which you have to fly to reach the next level of play. Once through it, you are ejected once more into space and the battle star explodes behind you.

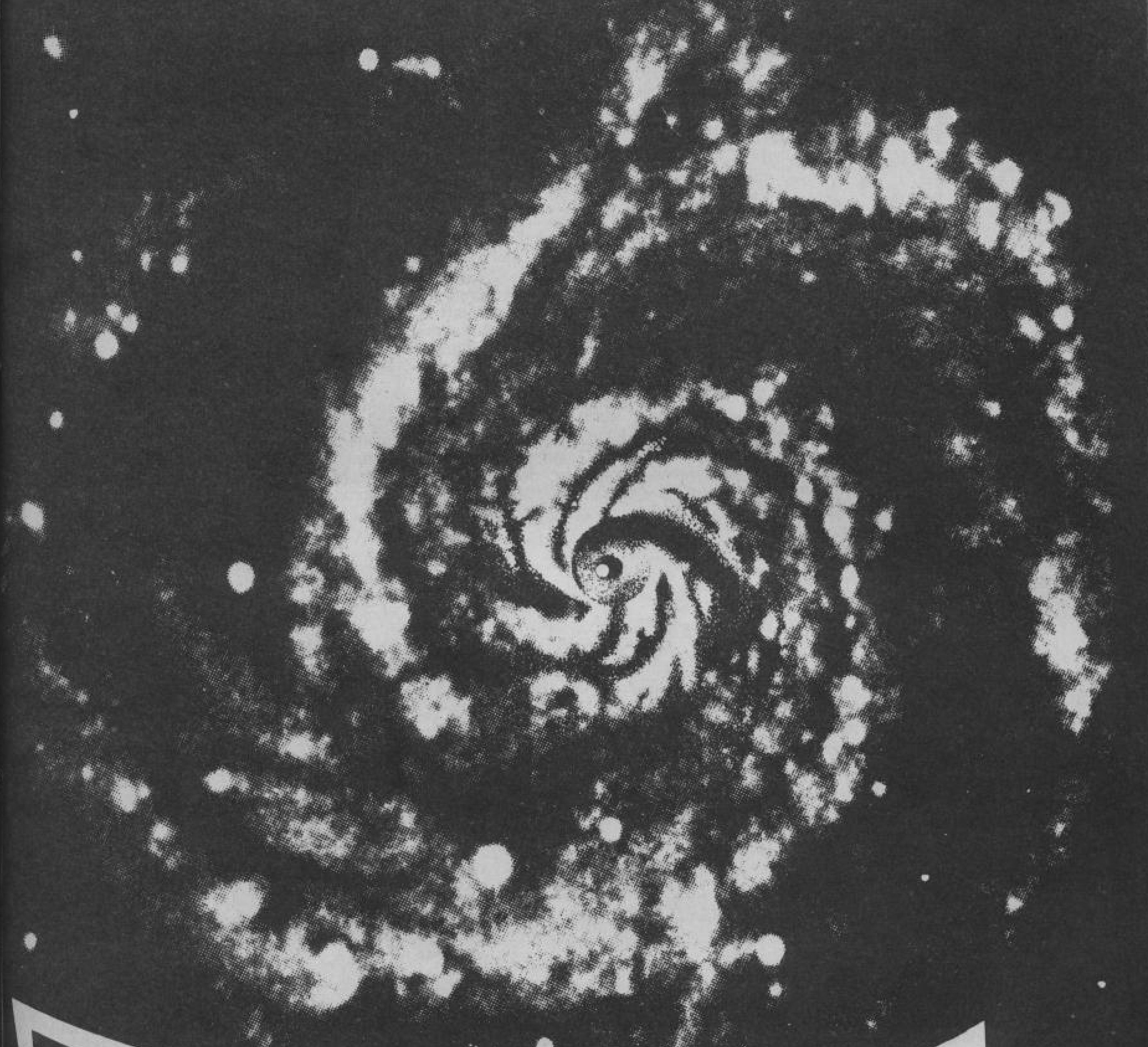
'*A pleasing and high-performance game,*' said the CRASH review.

CRASH has **100 copies of STARSTRIKE by Realtime**(retail price £5.95) to give away. If you would like a copy of the game, all you have to do is to answer the following five questions on the theme of space and send in your answers on a postcard (or the back of a sealed envelope) to:
STARSTRIKE COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB
to arrive no later than the first post **January 18 1985**.



STARSTRIKE COMPETITION

1. Was the first man to set foot on the moon A) Fred Nimblitz, B) Buzz Aldrin, C) Neil Armstrong, D) Yuri Gagarin?
2. Which is the largest planet in the Solar System? Is it A) Mercury, B) Saturn, C) Uranus, D) Jupiter?
3. Which country first sent a man into space? Was it A) China, B) The U. S. A. , C) Britain, D) The U. S. S. R. ?
4. A dog has orbited the earth in a spacecraft. Is this statement TRUE or FALSE?
5. What is the name given to a grouping of stars which appear to make up the shapes of mythical characters? Is it A) QUASAR, B) SPRINKLE C) CONSTELLATION D) CELESTIAL?



RACE

MOVI SOFT 2

READY, STEADY GO!!

KEVIN FOSTER TALKS TO MIKE ANDEREISZ OF ROMIK

Romik are back – that's the message for Spectrum owners everywhere. The Slough-based software company, whose headquarters are a dingy converted warehouse on an industrial estate, have recently begun producing games for the Spectrum again after a dry spell of almost two years. During that time they were not idle: development of the Commodore 64 and Amstrad computers, and the Touchmaster graphic pad are just a few of the projects undertaken by this ambitious young company. As an indication of their growing stature, Thorn EMI recently agreed to handle Romik's distribution network – a not inconsiderable scoop for a software house.

Romik came into existence in the middle of 1982, founded by two ex-members of Rabbit, **Mike Barton** and **Steve Clark**. With a fiercely independent spirit, the company survived mainly on freelance commission work. Games to their credit for the Spectrum 48K include *3D Monster Chase, Shark Attack, Colour Clash* and *Spectra Smash*. They now possess a full-time programming team for the first time, and the indications from Romik's Publicity Manager **Mike Anderiesz**are that the company is all set to go. The emphasis is on making 1985 their year, using the Spectrum as a launching pad.

The first and most obvious question is why were Romik out of the Spectrum market for so long?

In the first insatance, ours was a conscious decision to leave the Spectrum market. We felt that it was in a very healthy position indeed and was producing software of a very high standard. It didn't really need another software house. The Commodore market, however, did, and that's why we went there. We felt that the Commodore was lacking in imaginative, high quality software. Basically what Romik were looking for was somewhere to make an impact, and we found in the Commodore our best opportunity.

You believe then that the Spectrum market is now in a position where it's ripe for the picking?

Yes, in my opinion the Spectrum gets a superior quantity of advanced software.

Exactly when will Romik be releasing its new range of software for the Spectrum?

In the Spring of 1985. If they are successful then there will be more games to follow. It depends on the reaction they receive from the market. Obviously, if the games-buying public are impressed by them we will know that the market is ready for more.

How will Romik games differ from all the other games that are currently available to the home computer owner?

We are trying hard to take the computer game away from the arcade clone – the predictable 3D style, etc. Our games will be much more to do with role-playing, multi-player, arcade fantasies. But at the same time they will still be a lot of fun to play. Romik games will also be accurate, with less ferocious big-claims.

What do you mean by that last statement?

Well, look how many products claim to have the best 3D graphics, or title themselves 'epic arcade adventure games'. Megagames is a term that has been, blown out of all proportion. I'm personally very worried by the amount of misrepresentation that goes on in the advertising and packaging of cassettes. I don't think this is a conscious effort to mislead people, more of a bad habit that packagers and producers seem to have fallen into. When games make these sort of claims for themselves and then fail to live up to them, they are letting standards down quite drastically.

What do you think will be the likely outcome of all this?

I think the market is heading for a few unpleasant surprises. Come next year, for example, when the Christmas boom has died, home computer owners will suddenly find that they need to be a lot more discerning about the games they buy. And advertisers will have to learn to be a lot more particular about the terms they use to describe games. Frankly I'm surprised that the advertising standards authority hasn't stepped in sooner. All I'm saying is that people are going to be disappointed because some of the things they have been promised will simply not be delivered.

How does Romik intend to avoid the pitfall of misrepresentating games?

Romik will tell the truth about their games. We will be as objective as possible and expect to be crucified if we are wrong. We want to be sure that we deliver what we promise. Romik has a good name to live up to.

Will the games you release next year do justice to that reputation?

Yes, I think so. At the moment we are in the 3rd generation of software games. The 1st generation was typified by games such as *Pac Man*, the 2nd by *Time Gate* (for Quicksilva), and the 3rd by *Manic Miner*, which started a whole stream of amusing and imaginative games. Despite all the promises and all the claims, we're still in that 3rd generation today. Romik intend to be the first company to bring out 4th generation games, and these will be a considerable extension. I can tell you now that they will be something very special for the Spectrum owner. And while we are softening up the market, our in-house team will be developing the 5th generation of games for most of the major microcomputers. These will be released



in the Autumn of 1985, preceeded by a big advertising campaign.

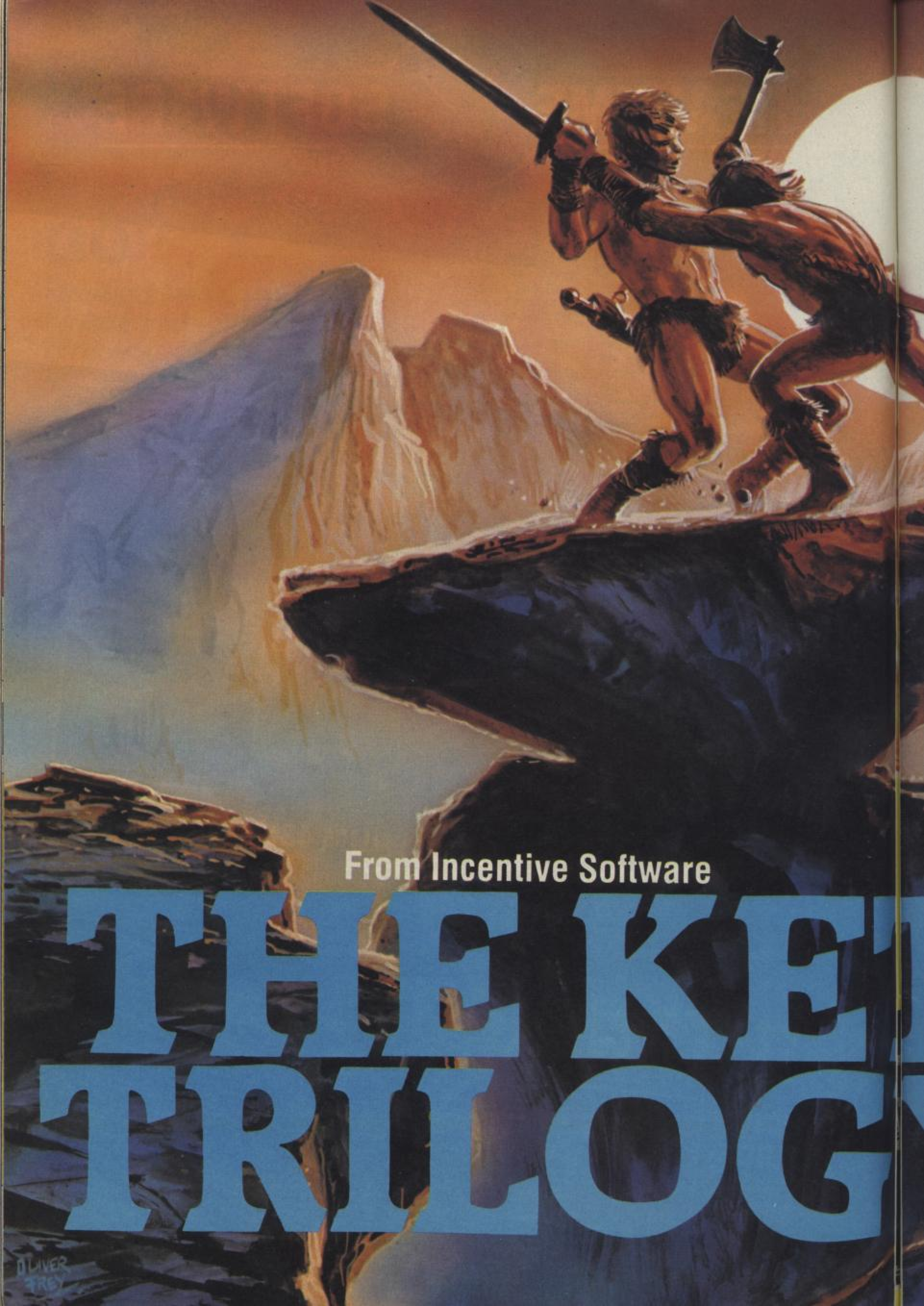
You talk of a 4th and now a 5th generation of games. Isn't there the danger that people will see this as an example of the sort of cheap publicity stunt that you criticised earlier?

Yes, there is, but I hope no one sees this as a cheap publicity stunt. We have the expertise now to produce the sort of games I've mentioned, and we're not confined by the sort of commercial demands that hamper other software houses. Nor are we under any pressure to release games, simply because we're not totally reliant on them for our survival. We've survived this far to date while other companies have gone under, by having a diverse range of activities to be involved in – consumer accounts, development of the Amstrad, and several other business projects that should see us well into next year. It's a very restricted market and most software houses are milking it dry, but Romik don't need to do that.

What then is your overall New Year message?

We want to tell Spectrum owners that we haven't forgotten them and we will not let them down. We could afford to lie low until we were ready to release our products. Now that the time has come, I'm convinced it was well worth waiting for.


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From Incentive Software

THE KE
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Crash Competition



CRASH has teamed up with INCENTIVE SOFTWARE to offer you the chance of winning a copy of their presentation gift pack *The Ket Trilogy* (retail price £12.95). Fifty lucky winners will receive the package — containing *Mountains of Ket*, *Temple of Vran* and *The Final Mission* — as a late filler in their stock - ings this Christmas.

The Ket Trilogy is an adventure classic for the Spectrum 48K, with the player atempting to liberate Ket from Vran and his evil entourage. As a bonus to the first person to fulfill the quest and free Ket, Incentive will duly bestow upon him or her the grand title of 'Britain's Best Adventurer' and offer them a video cassette recorder of their choice (to the value of £400).

So drag yourself away from the telly programmes this Christmas and get your thinking caps on, quick! All you have to do to win a copy of *The Ket Trilogy* is to study the three titles individually and using the letters in each title, make up 50 different words of three letters or more from each of them.

At CRASH we have maneged to get at least 70 words from each title, so it shouldn't be too difficult. If we can do it, so can you!

Write your words (150 in all) down on a piece of paper and send them in to **INCENTIVE COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than first post **January 18, 1984.**

Don't forget — the titles are:

MOUNTAINS OF KET
TEMPLE OF VRAN
THE FINAL MISSION

and you must make up 50 new words from **each** title. Please don't forget to put your name and address on the piece of paper you send in!!

THE BIGGEST COMMERCIAL BREAK OF THEM ALL

A look at the crash of Imagine Software as seen through the eyes of a film crew.

Depending on when you read this article, you may be about to see, have seen or maybe missed, a fascinating programme on BBC2 television (December 13th at 8.00pm) in the Commercial Breaks series about Imagine Software Limited. The Liverpool software giant crashed out during the summer after a life of a little over 18 months, during which time it produced more hype than any other software house before. The company appeared to bask in self-created publicity, much of which was very clever, and so it seems appropriate that its death should also have been as well recorded for posterity by the media it sought for its promotion, as had its successes in life. As things turned out, the BBC film crew got a rather different story to the one they had conceived, but much of the material shot for Commercial Breaks cannot appear in the finished programme, because it falls outside the scope of the series format.

Roger Kean spoke to BBC director **Paul Andersen** as he was busy putting the finishing touches to the programme.

GIVE US A BREAK

Early in the new year of 1984 BBC Television director Paul Andersen, who among other things was about to direct some of the programmes for the Commercial Breaks series, witnessed the enthusiasm surrounding some of the new generation of computer games that were beginning to appear in the shops, and appreciated that the emerging software houses were pioneering a new market. Commercial Breaks is a series which broadly examines the struggles of individuals and companies who are trying to 'break' a new product into the market place. To Andersen the new computer game software 'moguls' seemed like a good subject for a programme and he began researching, looking for a suitable company to feature.

An obvious place to look was in computer magazines, and it rapidly became apparent that Imagine was a strong contender because of the spate of clever advertising that was then appearing which was designed for Imagine by **Stephen Blower** of Studio Sting, an offshoot company of Imagine, coupled with the fact that Andersen, like so many people in Britain, was reading the national press publicity about Imagine's teenage programmer **Eugene Evans**, who was said to be earning £35, 000 a year and could afford a fablulously expensive car when he was still too young to be able to drive it. There was obviously a story here for Commercial Breaks.

The next step was to approach Imagine and ask the owners whether they would mind being featured. So Andersen travelled to Liverpool and spoke to the young bosses of the new company, **Mark Butler** and **David Lawson**. Lawson had written *Arcadia*, Imagine's biggest hit at the time, and Butler had sold it into shops starved of software over the 82 Christmas. At first they seemed a bit reluctant, and Imagine's Operations Manager, **Bruce Everiss**, explained that there were too many things under wraps to allow in the prying eyes of television. On the other hand the publicity-eager Everiss must have been able to see the promotional capital that could be made out of having BBC TV hanging around for some weeks making a film about them. Dave Lawson saw another angle altogether, and to appreciate this it's worth remembering what put Liverpool on the map in the early sixties.

BIRTH OF AN INDUSTRY

The Beatles transformed British (and then world) pop music in the early sixties, and created a modern myth about Liverpool, their home city. Over the years Liverpool has come to see itself as a possibly undernourished and underprivileged city, but one bursting at the seams with imagaination and guts. With the eighties something similar to the Beatles seemed to be happening, only in computer software this time, and Dave Lawson must have seen Imagine as being at its very centre. Stephen Blower says that, 'Lawson had some greater vision of what could be produced in software than anyone else I've ever met. '

At the time when Paul Andersen approached them, Imagine was working on the concept of the megagames, having exhausted the possibilities of the home computer's limited memory. Lawson, who was largely responsible for overseeing their development, saw that the BBC would be able to record for posterity the concept, development and creative effort of a dedicated team in bringing these new super games out. In a way, the Imagine team, and especially the men who ran the company, would be seen to be ushering in a new Beatles era, but in software rather than in music. For the TV director the megagames also offered an essential linch pin on which to hang his programme. It all seemed ideal and, at the time neither party knew how dramatically different things would turn out.

When the BBC film crew went in to start shooting material for the programme they realised that Imagine made good visual material; huge, luxurious offices, acres of carpet, computer terminals by the ton load, lots of young programmers, secretaries in abundance, young 'gophers' acting as runners for the management and a company garage packed with a fleet of Ferrari Boxers, BMWs for the lesser executives and the famous Mark Butler custom hand-built Harris motorbike. At the time Imagine was employing 103 members of staff. Andersen had a funny feeling that it all looked too good to be true – and it was.

He noted that beneath the energy and bustle there were inconsistencies. Principal of these was an apparent split in the senior management which meant factions were working against each other. But the first noted discrepancy in the outward bravado was that Eugene Evans had obviously never received anything like the £35, 000 a year quoted in the PR story. But what seemed more surprising to

Andersen, was that Evans had never really written any programs either – certainly nothing that Imagine cared to publish. This might not have surprised some of his contemporary Liverpudlian programmers who were working for other software houses, however, who knew much better.

THE GROWING SPLIT

Eugene Evans, like Mark Butler had worked at Microdigital, one of the first ever British computer stores, situated in Liverpool. Bruce Everiss was also associated with Microdigital, and so were many of the programmers who were later to become the bedrock of the Liverpool software business. They all knew each other pretty well. It was the sort of in-bred atmosphere which leads to personality clashes, and soon enough the BBC team began to see evidence of them.

The disparity between the publicity hype and the reality became increasingly apparent during the summer months. Central to the problems was the fact that both Mark Butler and Dave Lawson had catapulted to fame and fortune within a few months. They would have been super-human if they had not come to believe a little in their own publicity and both in their different ways appear to have failed in coping with the fortune. Mark Butler's background after leaving Microdigital was as Sales Manager for **Bug-Byte** where Lawson also worked as a programmer. They both left to set up Imagine in a small front room after several disagreements with the Bug-Byte management. The money that sales of *Arcadia* made over the Christmas of 82, was reinvested in bigger premises, personnel and in new programs, which also sold well. Naturally, the two young moguls needed staff and management to help administrate the in-pouring fortune, a classic situation which encourages the development of court chamberlains. One of the first such was Bruce Everiss, who seems to have naturally attached himself more to Mark than to Dave. Everiss was responsible for the day to day running of the company, but the responsibility for financial control and a directorship was put in the hands of **Ian Hetherington**.

Hetherington attached himself to Lawson. The factions had begun.

One of Mark's hobbies is fast motorbikes. He created the Imagine racing team and himself rode on the track. In fact Paul Andersen and the BBC crew were at the Isle of Man TT races in June filming at a time when Imagine was already in serious trouble and teetering on the brink of a crash. Mark did suffer a crash. Ironically, he was driven to the dismemberment of his empire swathed in bandages.

According to Andersen (a view backed up by many other observers), the two bosses thought that because of their success in the field of games production, it meant they could handle all sorts of other businesses as well. Almost at the outset they founded Studio Sting, together with Stephen Blower, the designer whose art work helped sell the company's image and which adorned Imagine covers. Studio Sting was to act as a design centre and Advertising Agency for Imagine, which meant the company would be entitled to an discount on ad space booked in magazines. In return Stephen Blower received a 10% *share of Imagine (which wasn't worth all too much when the share was gladly handed over). Within a few months this situation had changed and the 10%*was worth a lot on paper. The triad of Butler, Lawson and Hetherington wanted things rationalised – ie. they wanted the 10% back. There are many rumours attached to the goings on at this time, in-fighting appears to have been rife, but whatever actually took place, the outcome was that Studio Sting was left holding huge magazine advertising debts (which have remained unpaid) but Stephen held onto his 10%, although he lost any executive post within Imagine. He therefore lost control over his own destiny when management decisions led to its downfall, and is still undergoing legal wrangles between himself and Butler/Lawson as to his financial responsibilities in the matter of Imagine's vast debt.

In a telephone conversation with CRASH's Kevin Foster, Blower said, 'Imagine tried to accuse me of certain things that I didn't do. For instance, they said I was detrimental to the company's image and that I was booking advertising space that wasn't wanted. I was accused of stealing, or misappropriating £10, 000, and my wife was accused of being incapable of keeping the books at Studio Sting. All this



Stephen Blower – still stuck with some of the Imagine debt – is now a director of Ocean Software.

was later disproved in court.'

He went on to say, 'They were obviously after my 10. Imagine owed Studio Sting £89, 000, so the way I see it is that they attempted to brush that debt under the carpet. The allegations were just an attempt to condone their own actions. I was probably the only one at Imagine who stuck to what he was best at doing.'

THE MEGAGAMES

Late in 83 Imagine had set up a deal to produce games for publishers Marshall Cavendish which may have been worth as much as £11 million to Imagine. Early in 84 the contracts were signed, but even before Andersen had received the co-operation of Imagine to start shooting there were signs that all was not well with the deal. By the time the BBC crew was installed it was clear that things were going badly wrong. The megagames had intervened. Dave Lawson who, according to Bruce Everiss, always insisted that the programmers be left strictly alone, free to create without management interference, wanted to concentrate on the development of the megagames. Marshall Cavendish became disenchanted by the lack of progress on their games. They had already paid out a lot of money and seem to have been unhappy with the quality of what was ready. They pulled out and wanted their money back. But Imagine had taken on more people to cope, programmers, artists, musicians, gophers. None of these was laid off. the overheads went up alarmingly.

Meanwhile the megagames were not progressing as well as it was originally hoped they would. Andersen noted that John Gibson was working hard at *Bandersnatch* with Ian Weatherburn, but *Psyclapse* was nowhere, nothing more than a paper idea. Yet at this stage the artist Roger Dean (famous for his record album sleeves and mythological books) had already designed the boxes and the ads which were beginning to appear. Dean reputedly asked for £6, 000 for this job, and Andersen thought he was 'smart enough' to have demanded it up front.

An important problem with the megagames was that they required a hardware add-on which was to be made in the East. To get the price right, enormous quantities would have to be manufactured. Imagine did not possess the money any more, and anyway could not have sensibly decided how many games would eventually sell. There was indecision all round. Bruce Everiss was to say later, 'One option that we have is to sell the company as a whole to Sinclair Research, and I've been speaking to Sinclair Research, and they're not interested. They're saying that they want to keep programming of that nature outside their company.'

It transpired that Sinclair



Photo courtesy of the BBC

Programmer John Gibson at work on the megagame **BANDERSNATCH**, deep in the Imagine 'top security' area.

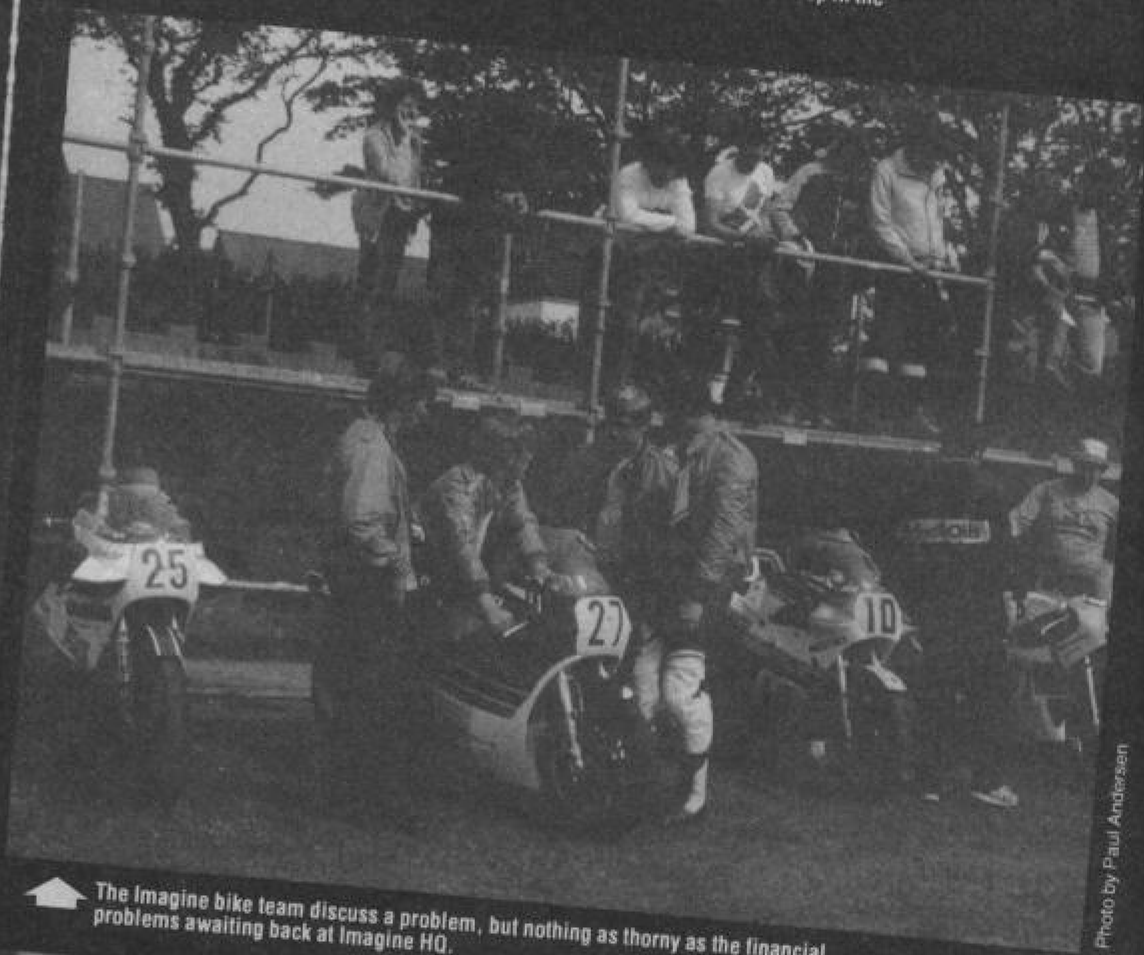


Photo by Paul Andersen

The Imagine bike team discuss a problem, but nothing as thorny as the financial problems awaiting back at Imagine HQ.



Mark Butler (right) at the Isle of Man TT races with team rider Mal. This was only days before the final nose dive.

Photo by Paul Andersen

Photo courtesy of the BBC



The Imagine top management team. Around the table from left to right, Bruce Everiss, Ian Hetherington, Dave Lawson, Mike Crofton (Advertising Manager) and Mark Butler.

Research was only interested in buying finished product and that the megagames would have to be designed to work on the micro-drive, because they would not undertake the production of masses of hardware add-ons. In the event Sinclair Reseach did buy an option on *Bandersnatch* for the QL computer to go on micro-drive.

Another interesting rumour that Paul Andersen's film team were able to verify, was what occurred over the Christmas period of 83. In 1982 there had been a software shortage in the shops. 1983 was to be a boom time, and Imagine decided on a clever ploy to foil the duplication of their rivals' tapes. Ahead of time they booked the entire duplicating capacity of Kiltdale, one of the biggest duplicators for the software business. The idea, obviously, was to make it impossible for other major companies to get enough tapes duplicated for the Christmas rush. On paper it looked like an elegant a piece of industrial sabotage. In practice it backfired. Imagine ended up hiring a warehouse for the storage of the hundreds of thousands of cassettes that they ended up with. After Christmas the bottom fell out of the market, and there was no way they could shift the games. This was a principal reason behind the strange move to lower the price of Imagine software. It

also backfired because they had flooded the shops with non-selling tapes, and then expected everyone to like the fact that the tapes would have to be sold at a price lower than the wholesale price the shopkeepers had bought the tapes in for in the first place.

THE SCRIPT CHANGES

So in the middle of shooting a TV programme about a company that was going places fast, Paul Andersen found himself filming one with a huge staff it no longer needed nor could afford, sitting on a vast stock of product it could not sell, with programmers left to their own devices much of the time and producing games that were increasingly unplayable and usually released with bugs still in them (remember *Stonkers*), run by a management team that was beginning to fall apart at the seams. Andersen recalls filming a meeting where the bosses sat around discussing how large the megagame boxes should be, whether they should be huge to entice punters to fork out £30 to £40, or whether the large size would put buyers off on the grounds that everyone knows model kit boxes are usually full of air. And this at a time when their empire was literally falling apart through lack of money and mounting debts. Lawson was buried in his megagames, Butler was acting out the role of playboy in his Ferrari and at the bike tracks. Everiss was trying to keep the offices running, while the rest of the 'top management team' struggled to cope with the increasing bitterness that was developing between the triad at the top. Some of the effects of what was happening were apparent to outsiders as well. I recall visiting Imagine for a meeting with Dave Lawson and Bruce Everiss sometime in late April. Lawson never turned up and Mark Butler appeared for a few moments, having just popped into the building to pick up some petty cash. It seemed a bit odd. The resulting article which appeared in CRASH naturally quoted Everiss the most. When the issue was published Butler rang me to complain that the emphasis was wrong – it made it sound like Everiss ran the company, he told me, when in fact he and Dave were still in charge.

As early as 16th April 1984, a petition was presented to the High Court by Cornhill Publications Ltd. , to have Imagine Software Ltd. wound-up for non-payment of debts. At the time of writing I have been unable to establish what these debts were, or how they were incurred. The matter was 'heard' on the 11th June, three or four days before the TT races. On Monday 9th July at the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) a futher petition to wind-up Imagine on behalf of VNU Business Press (publishers of Personal Computer Games among others) went unopposed. Imagine was finished.

But what was happening back in Liverpool? The BBC crew were filming right up to the last moment, and witnessed the apathy and confusion that attended the last days. A memorable scene is the man from Kiltdale the duplicators, walking up and down Imagine's offices trying to get to see either Butler, Lawson or Hetherington, the only people who could pay him the £60, 000 owed by Imagine, much of it for the mass duplication done over Christmas in an attempt to prevent other software houses having games ready. He was in despair. But Mark Butler was not available, and the Lawson/Hetherington faction had disappeared.

According to Bruce Everiss, they had already made their plans well beforehand, and events would appear to back him up. What he told Paul Andersen, is substantially the same as what he told me over the phone back in July. 'I'm not a signatory on the bank, or anything, but I've had a look at the financial records of the comapny and there has never been a VAT return *(Imagine had been running for 18 months and should therefore have made at least 6 VAT returns by law)*, never a bank conciliation, never a creditor's ledger control account, never any budgeting, never any cash flow forecasting, no cost centres, not even an invoice authorisation procedure. Just no financial control at all.'

All these financial aspects were supposedly the responsibility of Ian Hetherington. Paul Andersen recalls that Hetherington was usually unapproachable during filming and had little if anything to say to the film crew.

Is it possible that Hetherington had already sussed out the true financial position of Imagine right at the start of his tenure? It would be odd if he hadn't, since the cracks were there even before Christmas 83. What must surely have occurred to him is that Imagine was capable of making a lot of money, and that the megagames were going to make them all very rich. A lot of Imagine was now defunct and wasting money. Debts were getting to be astronomical, various attempts to raise money in the City had failed or been abandoned. If the company went, so would the investment in the megagames, so too would their personal finances.

Everiss again: 'Dave has become anxious about losing his big house in Coldy and about his kids at expensive schools and Ian has become greedy and wants to become a millionaire overnight. So Ian has presented this Finchspeed plan to Dave. Dave, grasping at straws, has taken it on board – which means that only 20 people will be employed.'

THE RESCUE PLAN

Finchspeed. The name first hit the press after the Imagine collapse. Finchspeed was the new company founded by Dave Lawson and Ian Hetherington for what appears to be the express purpose of acquiring all the Imagine assets. As a result of canvassing opinion and currying favour with those programmers whom Lawson and Hetherington considered 'sympathetic' to them (rather than the Butler/Everiss faction), jobs were offered in the new company to approximately 20 people – in fact those needed to continue work on and complete the megagames.

At the time the Finchspeed documents were drawn up, very few people knew about the Lawson/Hetherington plans. It seems Mark Butler had no idea and Bruce Everiss certainly didn't. 'They didn't tell Mark about this until the very last minute when they let him in on a third of Finchspeed,' Everiss told Paul Andersen later. It seems incredible that the duo thought they could get away with transferring assets from a company part-owned by Butler, without his knowledge. Stephen Blower was also in the dark. Later, he was to be held jointly responsible in law for Imagine's debts. He told us, 'I'm still liable for the over draft, which was £112,000 at the last count. If it came to court I think I would have a good case against them, as has been shown last time I took them to court.' Blower appears to have maintained that Butler and Lawson should have protected his interests better, and the Courts have agreed. Butler and Lawson were ordered to pay Blower back the £89, 000, but failed to do so. At a later hearing the Judge said that he ought to send Butler and Lawson to jail for refusing a court order to pay, but they were let off on the grounds that in jail they would be unable to put matters right and that it was in the best interests of both parties if they were allowed to continue their present work to be enabled to pay Blower.

Although the Finchspeed arrangements were made in secrecy, it did not quite escape the notice of the BBC team, who actually filmed Dave Lawson signing a legal document relating to some aspect of Finchspeed. This shot appeared in the 'rough cut' of the programme (at the time of writing it is not known whether it remains), but because this deal was largely outside the scope of the programme, the shot is just there as visual background.

On a later occasion the film crew were also present when Dave Lawson's wife came into his office to get papers signed for a passport shortly before he left for America with Hetherington. With the winding-up orders going through the courts unopposed, Lawson and Butler prepared to disappear from the scene.

On the telephone, Hetherington told us, 'I didn't run away anywhere. I spent four weeks, day and night writing a business report. I was in America for fund-raising, and we were damn near successful, but we had to have our trip cut short because of the goings-on at Imagine.' He added, 'I'm sick to death of people insinuating that anything untoward happened at Imagine.'

In retrospect it seems incredible that they should leave the country at such a time, unless one supposes that they felt unable to face the imminent disaster. Protests that the trip was a realistic fund-raising exercise for Imagine seem undermined in the face of the writs going unopposed through the law courts before and during their trip. As soon as the two men had gone, numerous creditors, trying for weeks to get some reply to their demands for overdue payment, were stumped, because with Lawson and Hetherington gone, there was no one able to cope with the financial problems. It's

or three days later before the assembled staff and told them in a brief speech that it was over, that he hoped they would get paid what they were owed if it was possible, and that he would try to find alternative employment for as many as possible. During the period between Lawson and Heatherington vanishing and the bailiffs arriving, life in the Imagine HQ appears to have been as disorganised and dream-like as it was in Hitler's Berlin bunker. In reply to Paul Andersen's question about what had been happening, Everiss replied: 'Well, there was a whole pile of people just playing games there and they're hiding from the camera. If you go round the corner here, by the exit, you'll find there's a big pile of empty fire extinguishers because there's been fire extinguisher fights all week. That's been the main event.'

As far as the BBC team could see, the staff were mostly sitting around, watching videos and waiting for the end. Everiss was left with trying to find jobs for about 60 staff, those left behind by the new Finchspeed crew, and in the end he felt morally obliged to resign. 'Dave and Ian, being too much of cowards to face up to me, have told Mark that they wouldn't want me here when they returned,' he said.

That was largely it for Imagine Software Limited, but not for the people involved. Finchspeed has gone on to develop the megagame *Bandersnatch* for Sinclair Research to bring out on the QL in the New Year, with a royalty from each unit sold going back to the Imagine Liquidators to help pay back the company's debts. It is a critical time for its directors, Dave Lawson and Ian Heatherington, who are naturally afraid of any adverse publicity. Even as I was in London seeing the rough cut of the TV programme, Ian Heatherington was on the phone trying to get hold of Paul Andersen. When I returned to Ludlow that Friday evening, I was greeted with a message that Heatherington had rung me to find out the same thing, having heard that we were writing about the story. Unfortunately for him he spoke to our Financial Director, and was told that as he still owed us £5, 825, it wasn't sound sense to bother us!

We phoned him on the following Monday morning, when he spoke to Kevin Foster and gave him the quotes used in this article. He also implied that if we printed anything he didn't like, we would be making him a rich man. Implications of libel actions are all very well. The fact remains that CRASH, along with other publications, had been promised payments by both Imagine's promotional department and (in our case) by Heatherington personally. These never arrived. But at the time, he and Lawson were assigning assets out of Imagine into another company hard to accept Heatherington's comments to us at face value when (whether intended or not) his absence put a total block on payments. Yet equally it must have been clear to him that payments could not be met.

WINDING DOWN

With knowledge that VNU had succesfully issued a winding-up order on Imagine, the rest of the company's creditors began jamming the switchboard to find out what was going on. CRASH was one of them. The official line was that things were quite normal. But no one knew where Lawson, Heatherington and Butler were. Everiss told Paul Andersen, 'Mark didn't know where they'd gone. The only person they told was Andrew Sinclair, who basically's just David's gopher, and Andrew has been spying on Mark and myself and reporting on a daily basis to them in San Francisco.'

One press mention did suggest that the two directors were in the States trying to raise venture capital in Silicon Chip Valley to save Imagine, but this would appear to be out of character with their recent actions in moving assets from Imagine to Finchspeed, and gives strength to Bruce Everiss who said, 'All they're trying to do is finance Finchspeed with capital from San Francisco.'

The significance of the passport signing became more apparent when it was realised that both men had taken their wives with them on the trip to America at a cost estimated by Everiss to be possibly as high as £10, 000, and that at a time when creditors were crawling all over the building trying to get paid.

On the day Mark returned from the races, wrapped in bandages and driven by someone else, he arrived at Imagine headquarters to find the bailiffs were in. One of the items they impounded was his pride and joy, the Ferarri Boxer. Paul Andersen recalls that he seemed stunned and totally out of his depth. He didn't know what to do or who to blame; it seemed he was genuinely unaware that things had reached such a state, or that his co-directors had fled the country and were in hiding (as everyone said), incommunicado. So closely did the TV crew follow the proceedings that they almost had their camera gear locked into the building by the bailiffs!

Mark went off, to return two which they both part-owned at a time when Imagine was hoplessly in debt, and desperately required those assets if it was to have a hope of staying alive. Recognition of this fact can be seen in that a royalty on every copy of *Bandersnatch* sold by Sinclair will be going back to Imagine's liquidators.

Some of the programmers are now working freelance on games for Ocean, and others, including **John Gibson** have founded a new Liverpool company with partial backing from Ocean called **Denton Designs** and their first game, an adventure entitled *Gift From the Gods* should be released through Ocean shortly. Mark Butler is working with his father in another software company called Voyager. Stephen Blower worked for the year as a freelance and is now at Ocean, where he has recently been made a director. Of the collapse of Imagine he had this to say, 'Through greed, or little boys playing at big business, or whatever it was that carried it all they ruined something that was worthwhile carrying on with.'

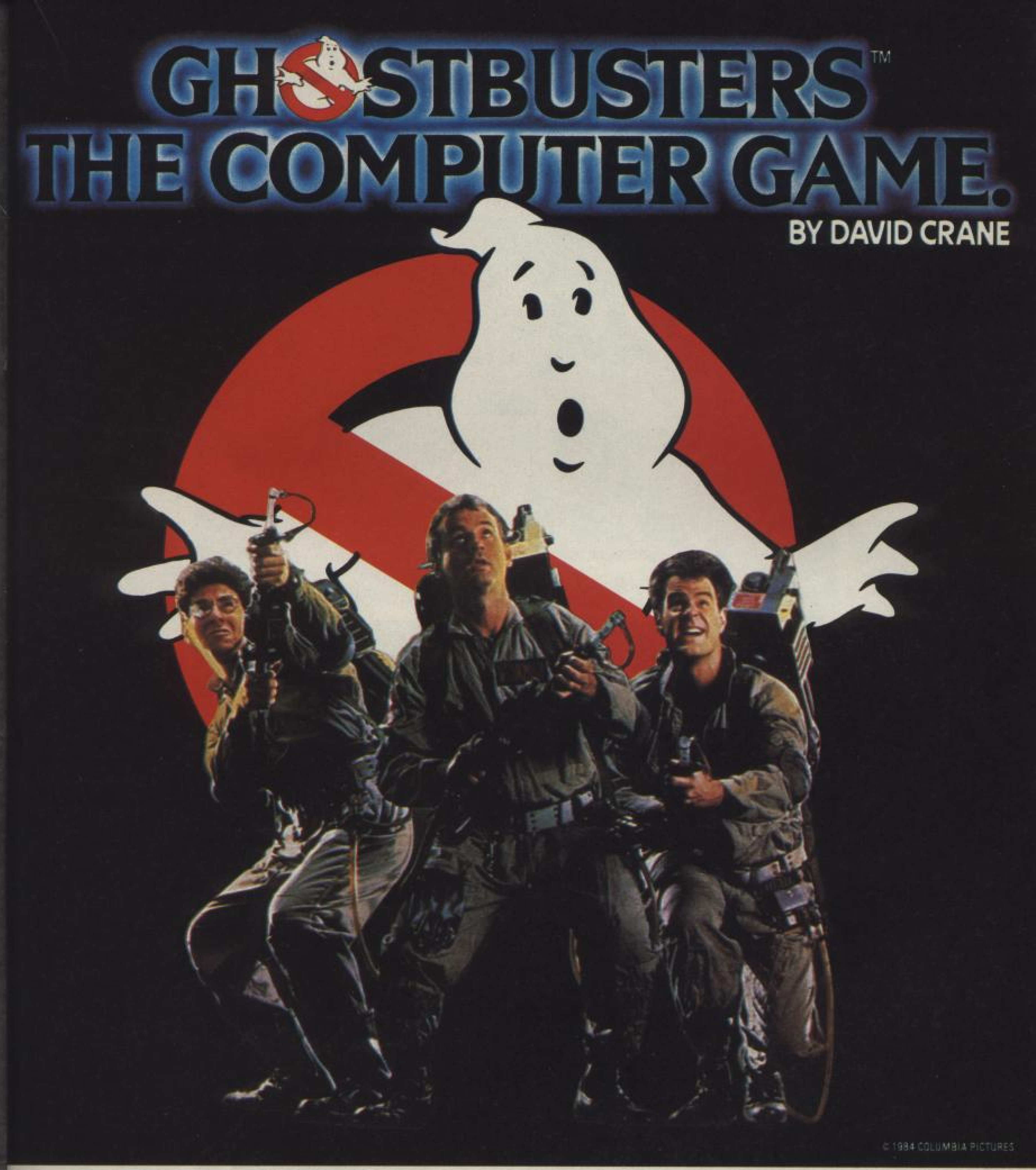
Heatherington added, 'My attitude has always been that it's all over now, and what we'll do is quickly get our lives back together again. I don't want people bringing back something that happened six or seven months ago. What we're doing now, Dave and I, is improving on megagames to produce something quite startling. We want to bow out at the top.'

In summing up his unique experience in watching the death of the software giant, BBC director Paul Andersen said, 'It was a fascinating time in a city at the focus of the software business. It's a shame it all fell apart – there were a lot of talented people there who were let down. It's a bit like a movie that never got made, all the technicians and all the energy, but the producers failed. It's going to be interesting to see what will come of them all.'

With the finish of Imagine, the TV programme may have looked as though it was over too. Howewver Ocean bought a major portion of Imagine's assets and so Paul Andersen had a finale thrown in his lap. Filming continued at Ocean's offices in Manchester, as they worked on *Hunchback II*. The BBC may not have got the story of the Imagine megagames, but at least they managed to follow the development of computer games from concept to release, and in the process they saw a fascinating slice of corporate life.



Moving on from Imagine, the BBC crew finished the programme off with Ocean. Here, the children of Lostock School, Stretford, search for bugs and give their verdict on a pre-production copy of the new game HUNCHBACK II as the film camera turns over.



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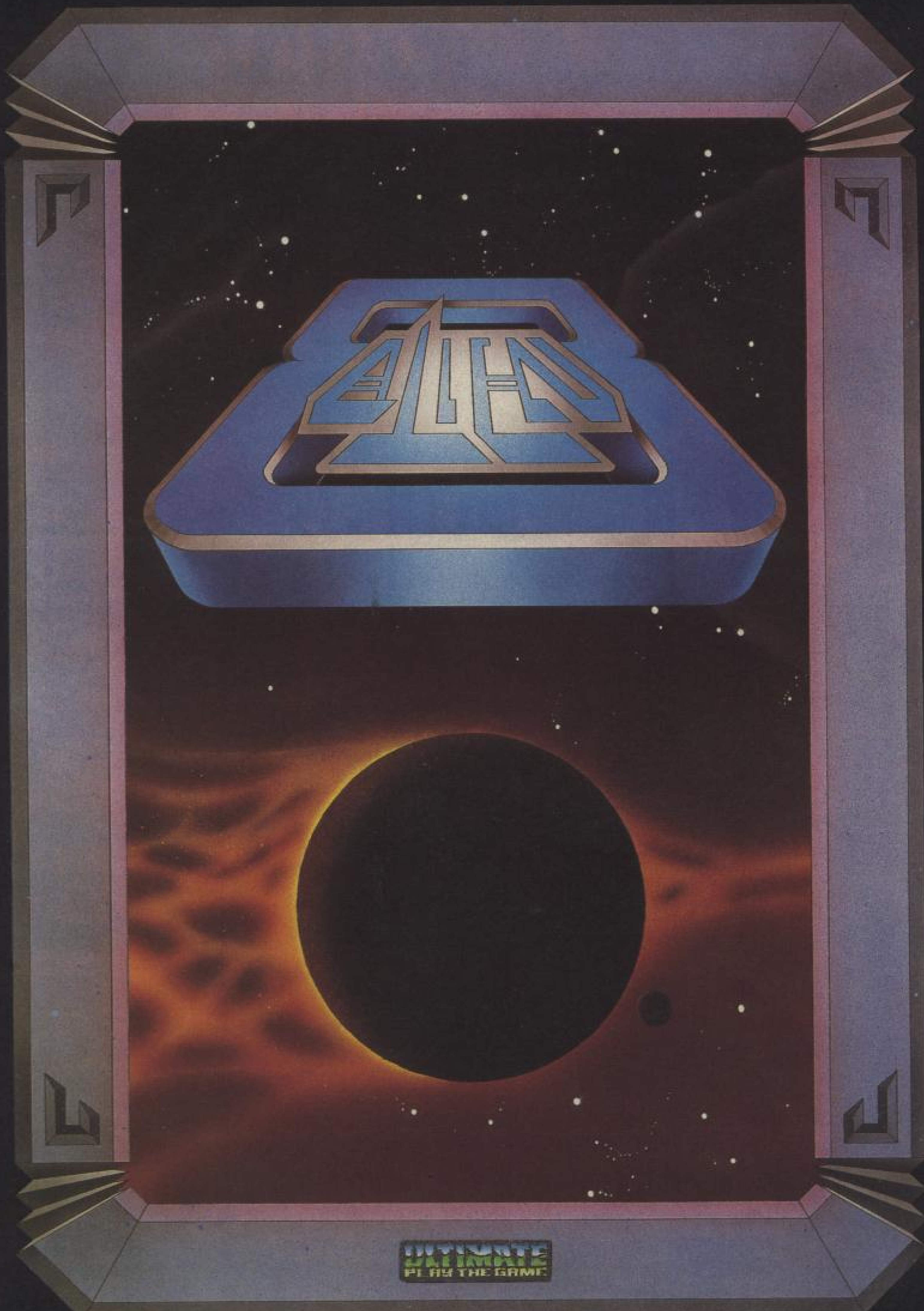
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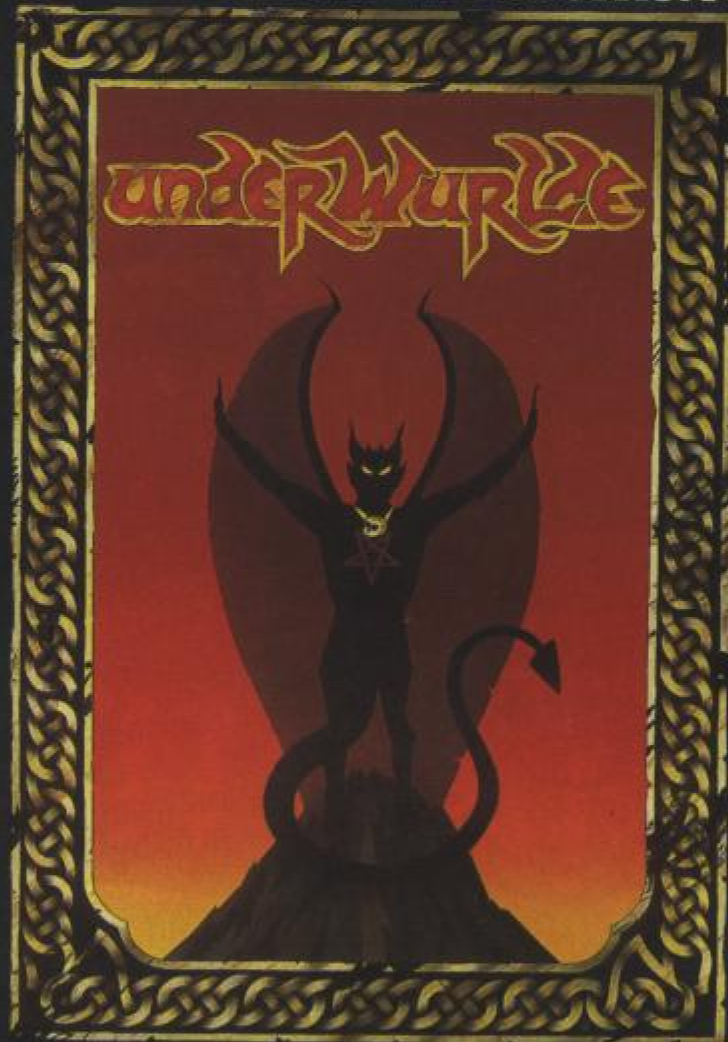
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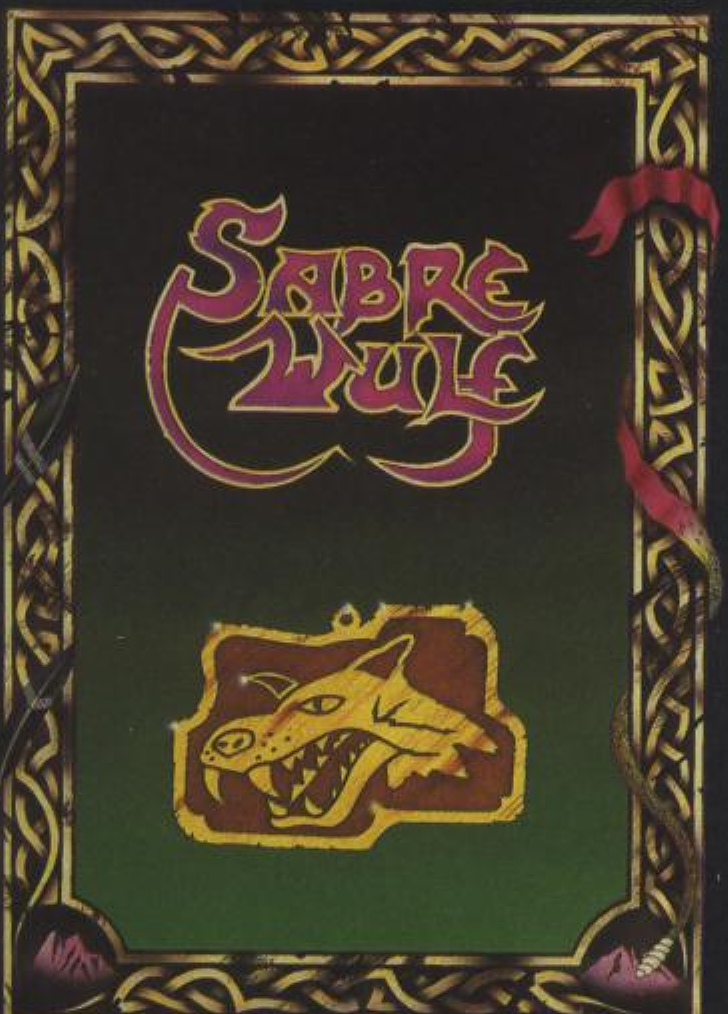
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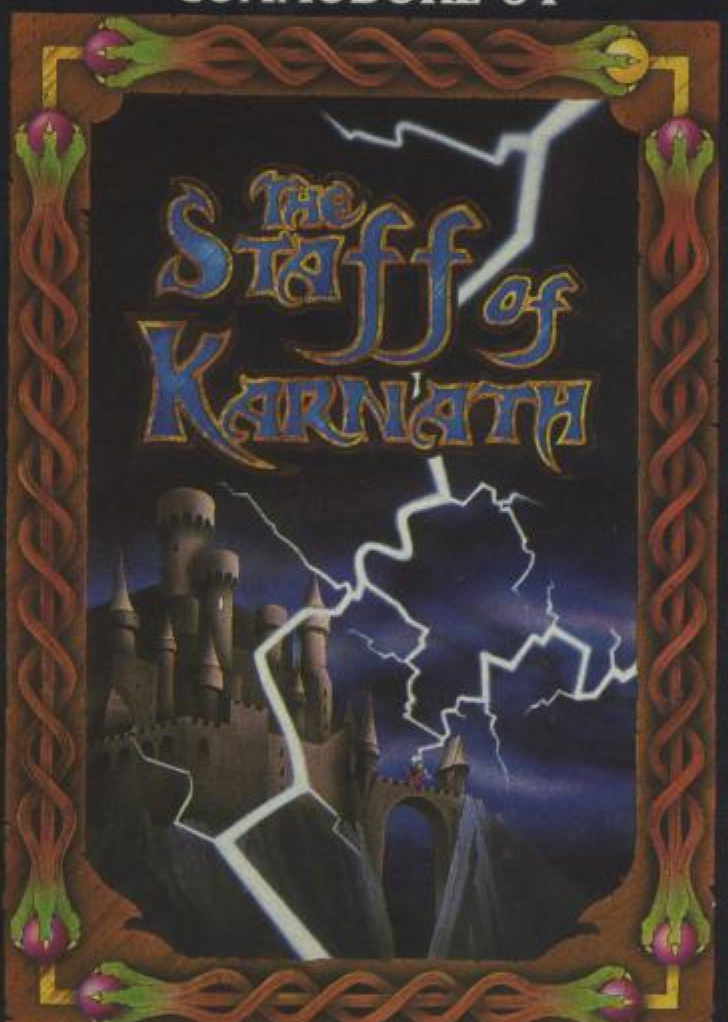
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COMMODORE 64



"KNIGHTLORE", "UNDERWURLDE", "SABRE WULF", and "STAFF OF KARNATH" recommended retail price £9.95 inc VAT. Available from W.H.SMITH, BOOTS, J.MENZIES, WOOLWORTHS and all good software retail outlets. Also available from ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU (P&P are included) Tel: 0530 411485

Crash Competition

Following the successful response to the *Atic Atac* (June) and *Sabre Wulf* (August) map competitions, ULTIMATE presents yet another opportunity exclusively to CRASH readers to show off their graphic skills. This time, together with CRASH, they are running a double-barrelled competition, and invite you to send in either a map of *Underwurlde* or of *Knight Lore*.

THE ULTIMATE CHRISTM



You can send in a map for one of these games, or you can enter both competitions separately. It's up to you. What we don't want is an entry which actually combines both games in one map!

Remember to make your maps as detailed and accurate as possible with a key to objects and their uses, hazards and physical objects within locations. We are looking for well designed and attractive looking maps with clever presentation.

6 SPECTRUM+ COMPUTERS TO BE WO



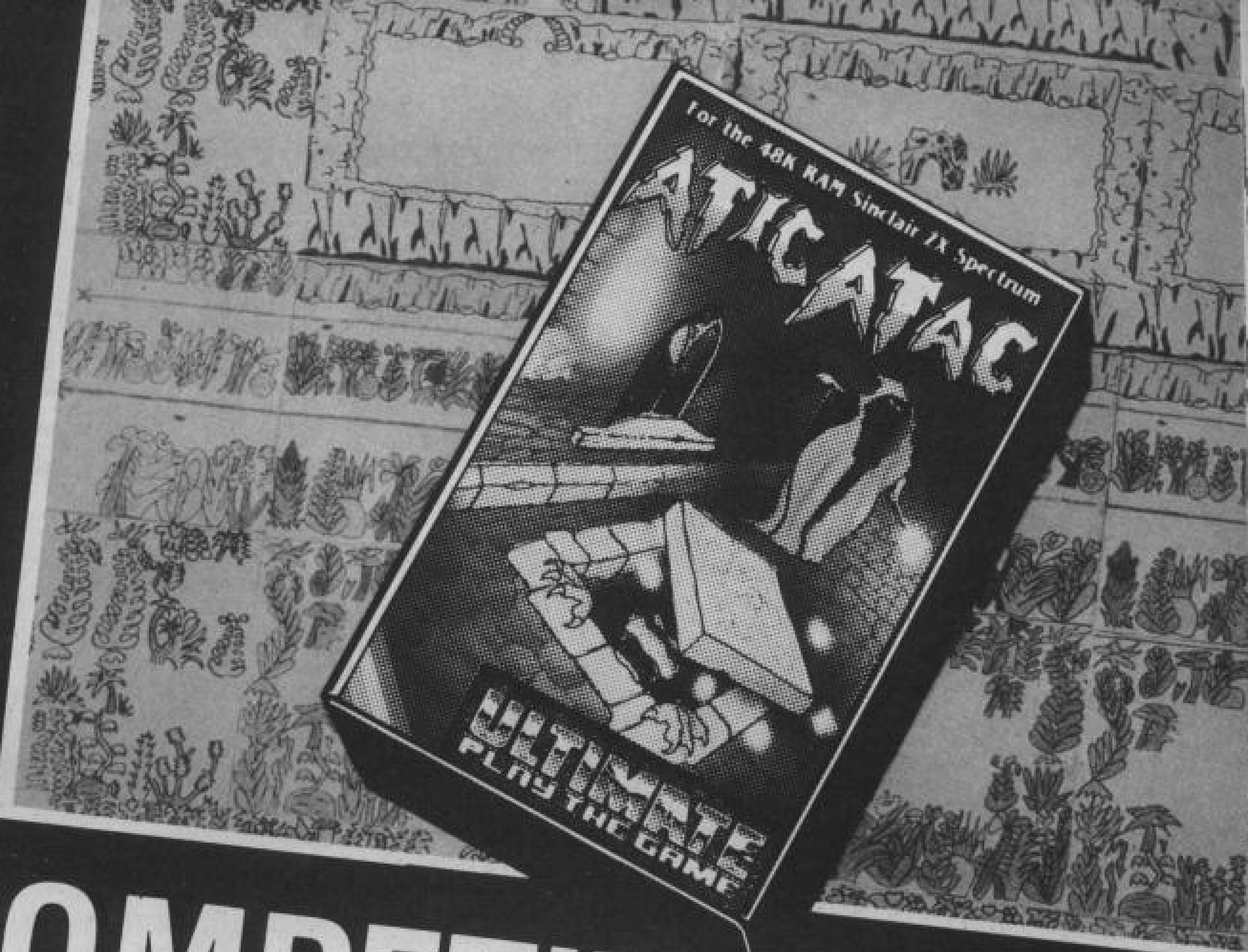
THE PRIZES

First Prize in both competitions is a glittering trophy, similar to those awarded to the winners of the previous competitions. The *Atic Atac* winner received the superb Golden Key of ACG, while the *Sabre Wulf* winners received the ACG Amulet.

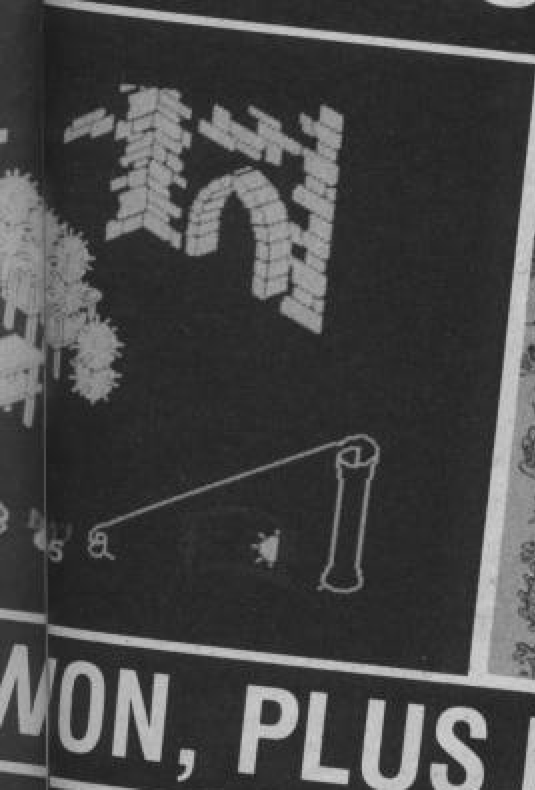
The lucky winners of *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore* will also receive a sparkling new Spectrum+ and a mixed bag of ULTIMATE goodies including software, t-shirts, hats etc. Second and Third prize winners in both categories will also receive a Spectrum+ and the ULTIMATE goodies.

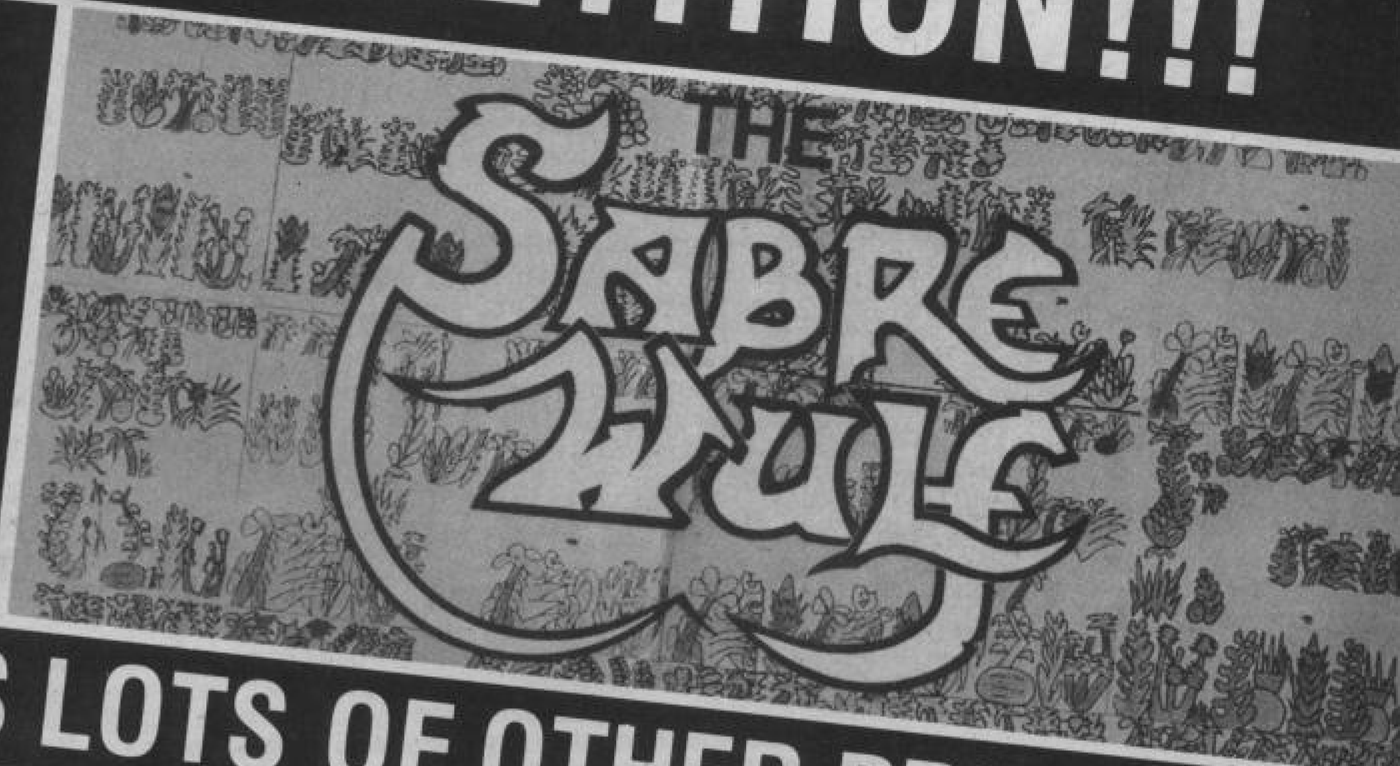
The winning entries will be published in CRASH at a later date. Entries should be sent to: ULTIMATE COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB, to arrive no later than the first post January 31 1985.



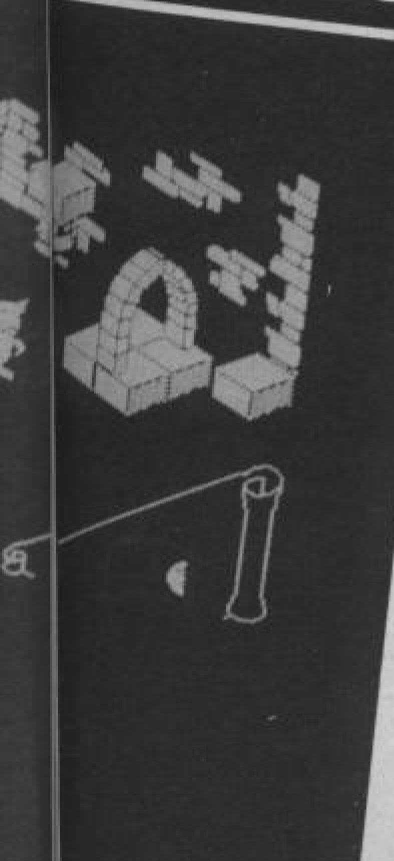


TMAS COMPETITION!!!





WON, PLUS LOTS OF OTHER PRIZES!!!





PLEASE REMEMBER to include suitably stamped addressed envelopes/postal tubes, if you wish your entry to be returned after the competition.

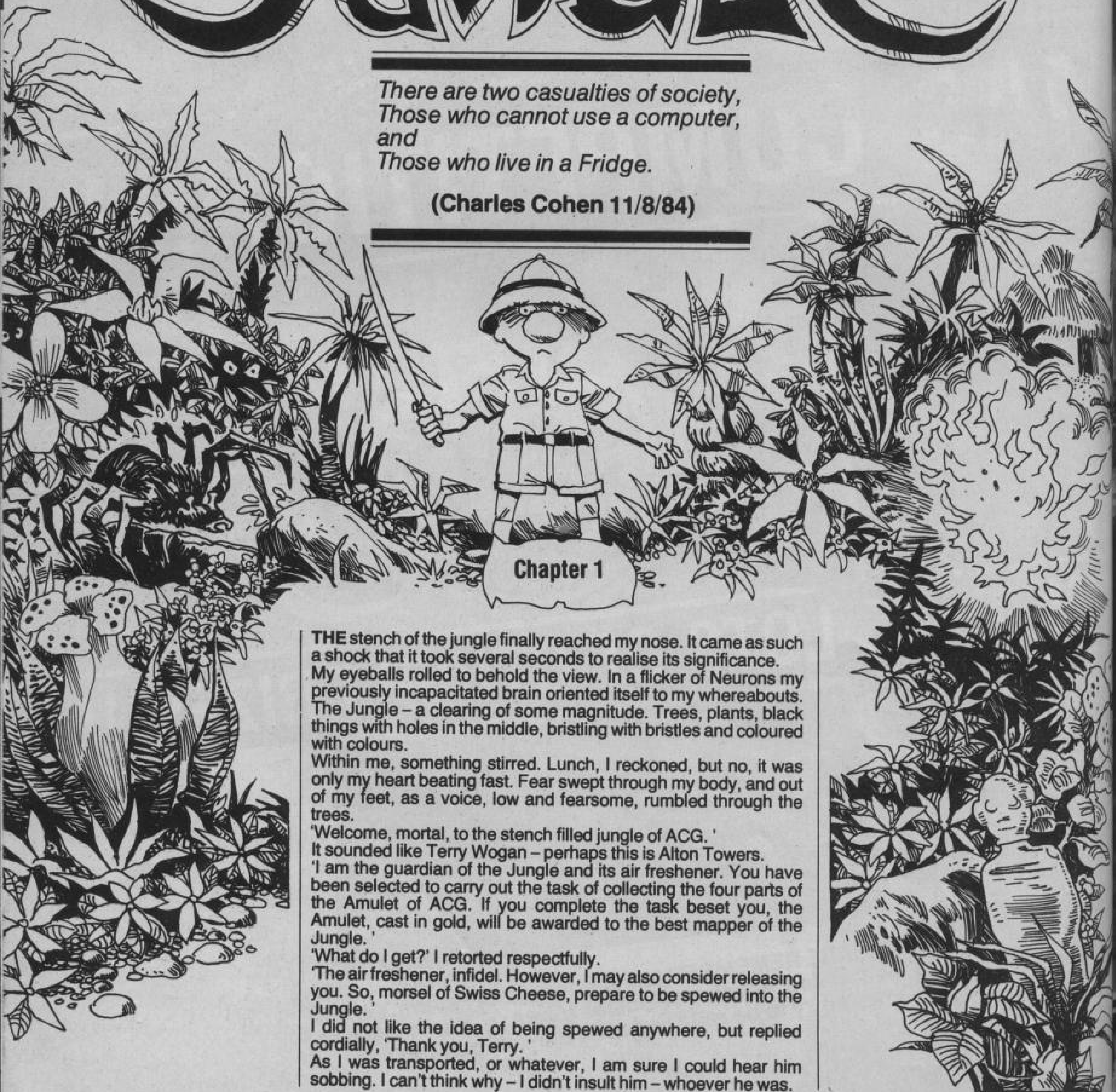
As we promised two issues ago when the Sabre Wulf Map Competition results were announced, here is the short story which accompanied the entry of *Charles P. Cohen*

SABRE MAN IN HIS FIRST ADVENTURE

JUNGLE

There are two casualties of society,
Those who cannot use a computer,
and
Those who live in a Fridge.

(Charles Cohen 11/8/84)



Chapter 1

THE stench of the jungle finally reached my nose. It came as such a shock that it took several seconds to realise its significance. My eyeballs rolled to behold the view. In a flicker of Neurons my previously incapacitated brain oriented itself to my whereabouts. The Jungle – a clearing of some magnitude. Trees, plants, black things with holes in the middle, bristling with bristles and coloured with colours.

Within me, something stirred. Lunch, I reckoned, but no, it was only my heart beating fast. Fear swept through my body, and out of my feet, as a voice, low and fearsome, rumbled through the trees.

'Welcome, mortal, to the stench filled jungle of ACG.'

It sounded like Terry Wogan – perhaps this is Alton Towers.

'I am the guardian of the Jungle and its air freshener. You have been selected to carry out the task of collecting the four parts of the Amulet of ACG. If you complete the task beset you, the Amulet, cast in gold, will be awarded to the best mapper of the Jungle.'

'What do I get?' I retorted respectfully.

'The air freshener, infidel. However, I may also consider releasing you. So, morsel of Swiss Cheese, prepare to be spewed into the Jungle.'

I did not like the idea of being spewed anywhere, but replied cordially, 'Thank you, Terry.'

As I was transported, or whatever, I am sure I could hear him sobbing. I can't think why – I didn't insult him – whoever he was.



Chapter 2

EVERY muscle in my body seized up as I was spewed into the Jungle. Soon, however, my legs unknotted themselves and I became aware of my surroundings.

I was in a similar clearing to the last one, but with one major difference. I was wearing some really ludicrous clothes.

Upon my head was a pith helmet, and I was clad in khaki. My instincts told me I was mad, but the label on the shorts read **C&A 100% Cotton**.Figures.Only C&A could produce something like this.

Next came another major revelation. Hanging loosely on my back was an elongated letter opener. Perhaps Mr. Wogan isn't so evil after all – this will be useful for opening coconuts and passion fruit.

At that time I was still in a daze, but as sure as eggs are eggs, I was not alone. The ground in front of me heaved and a small hole appeared. From it emanated a nasty-looking creature, resembling a spider. Without thinking I drew my letter opener. Stab, stab, swipe, schylik! It disappeared. This was not the last time I would see the thing, as more appeared all the while, and suffered the same fate.

I noticed something in an alcove on the other side of the clearing. It looked remarkably like a pith helmet of the sort I had on, sitting on a pile of wood.

Gadzooks! – a grave! Another unfortunate had also ventured here and been reaped. In a mark of respect I crossed it, but as I picked it up – splat – it had gone.

At that same moment another fiend appeared. This time a very vicious looking bush fire, sweeping across the clearing at me. Seeking a way out, I dashed blatantly through a gap in the trees. .

Chapter 3

UPON leaving the clearing I met another fellow human person. I first caught sight of him running from the East, waving frantically, with spear and shield. I reasoned that he may have been in peril. As he approached, a snake-like something appeared directly in his path. Being the civil and public spirited person that I am, I called to him to look out. He seemed to take no notice, and then had the audacity to walk unharmed over the creature.

Assuming that he understood the Queen's English, I exclaimed, 'That's good. How do you do it?'

There came no reply. He just ran at me. Again, letting my instincts take over, I drew my weapon and stabbed at him. Too far away. I inadvertantly returned my sword to its sheath. As I did all went black, I was thrust backwards and slammed into a wall of trees. He was still advancing. I stood up, drew my swordly thing and. . .

The bounder just waddled off in the other direction.

'Um Bongo, ' it uttered just as a Hippo passed it.

Hippopatamus – a big, purple, hairy lump of an animal, bounding towards me like a sloppy puppy. It looked too cute to stab, but maintaining my stiff upper lip attitude, I poked it just for good measure. As it raced by, I felt a twinge of guilt.

Presently I reached a corner, and took it to be faced by yet another corner. As I rounded the latter, more nasties appeared, this time a scorpion and a rather moronic looking parrot. A short slaughter later, I found myself headed North, around several disorienting passages and into a clearing not unlike the one from which I started.

Similar, that is, except for one thing. In the corner, glimmering in sunlight, was a quarter piece of the extraordinary Amulet. I hastened towards it.

Chapter 4

THE air was filled with a dulcet tune, and the voice of the guardian reappeared.

'One piece is all that you have found,
collect three more and outward bound. '

'Very nice, Terry, ' I whispered, sarcastically.

'Shut up, and get on with your impossible task, crouton features. '

At that I was returned to my normal insane condition and dwardled off, by now feeling rather fatigued.

So my travels continued, for a short time anyway, because I came across an extremely odd odment, in the shape of a very odd bottle. This bottle was in the shape of a man, and about the size of an Action Man. Bravely, I unscrewed the head. Why, I don't know, I mean I'm not getting paid for this *(you sure aren't –Ed)*. Within the bottle lay a liquid. Goodo – I thought –perhaps it's tea. So I drank some.

'Extra Life!' bellowed Terry Wogan.

'Spot on!' I replied, not quite knowing what he meant.

After that brief, but very poignant encounter, I trotted off again, slaughtering innocent animals, prodding hippos and warthogs and generally savaging the savages.

Soon I stumbled over something new. A monstrous flower in the middle of the path. When I first saw it, it was only an iddy little thing, but as I approached it burst into flower, a big yellow obtrusion onto which I trod.

That I regretted. For as soon as I squashed it, I was left immobilized for an uncomfortable period of time (– so what's new)?

Still, after my bout of *immobilitis*, I was back on my blistered feet, flying along at a cracking pace, until. . .



Chapter 5

'GADZOOKS!' was my first word. The shock was so great I nearly fainted.
As I passed yet another corner, I waltzed straight into an enormous wolfy thing, spurring and gleeping and running with great power. With nowhere to turn, I drew my letter opener in a pathetic Last Stand. An Englishman should go down fighting. I did too.
As I cascaded across the undergrowth, I half expected to see Terry Wogan descending from the trees, releasing upon the foul creature the wrath of ten thousand mutant space invaders. To the contrary, however, he just laughed and commented to the effect that I was incompetent. What a liberty! I shall never listen to his radio program again! Sabre Wulf indeed!
When I had got over that minor trauma, I meebled off again and eventually reached a forbidding mountain range. How I managed to reach there, I don't know – the Jungle is more confusing than the Barbican.
After obtaining another potion thingy, I clambered along the side of the mountains, hoping for a way out. Sure enough, there was one, but before I took it, I ran into another triffidy thing, this time a blue one.
Whizzo! – I became super fast and invulnerable! Double Whizzo!
I speed off at double speed, all over the place, and presently arrived at a nasty's hut. The door was open, but on trying, it appeared I could not get in! I decided to wait for tea time, when I was sure they would return. However, none appeared, so I thought it better to depart.

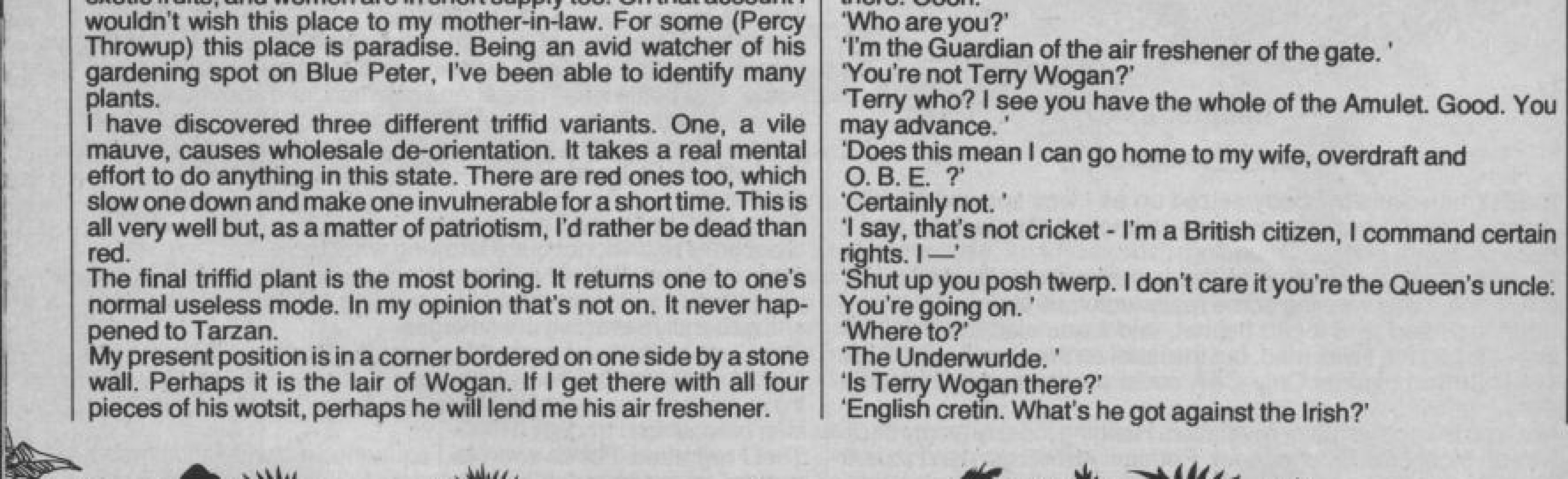


Chapter 6

IT is now a long time since I wrote last. Since then I have obtained a further two parts of the Amulet.
Each time I get a new piece, Terry Wogan cuts in with his tune and piece of inane poetry. I never knew he had it in him. Come to think of it, I wish I'd never found out.
I've found plenty of things around here. Little ponds are all over the place, but I don't have any swimming shorts, so am unable to bathe. Ojects of all sorts are in abundance.
As regards food, I've been really disappointed by the lack of exotic fruits, and women are in short supply too. On that account I wouldn't wish this place to my mother-in-law. For some (Percy Throwup) this place is paradise. Being an avid watcher of his gardening spot on Blue Peter, I've been able to identify many plants.
I have discovered three different triffid variants. One, a vile mauve, causes wholesale de-orientation. It takes a real mental effort to do anything in this state. There are red ones too, which slow one down and make one invulnerable for a short time. This is all very well but, as a matter of patriotism, I'd rather be dead than red.
The final triffid plant is the most boring. It returns one to one's normal useless mode. In my opinion that's not on. It never happened to Tarzan.
My present position is in a corner bordered on one side by a stone wall. Perhaps it is the lair of Wogan. If I get there with all four pieces of his wotsit, perhaps he will lend me his air freshener.

Chapter 7

EUREKA! – I've found it! The final quarter of the Amul-wotsit! Now to find the keeper chappie – the final chapter, the end, finis etc. I'll soon be free to go back to my modest flat in Islington and read the Financial Times with my slippers on! Spiffing - what?
I'm nigh certain that Terry is situated in the cave to my left. I can see it now – the front page of the Daily Telegraph –Islington Business Man Escapes Stench Filled Jungle of ACG.
Perhaps an O. B. E. is in order. Me – an O. B. E. – perhaps even a Kinghtlorehood. Here it is. the cave. The Guardian's Lair! Nearly there. Oooh.
'Who are you?'
'I'm the Guardian of the air freshener of the gate. '
'You're not Terry Wogan?'
'Terry who? I see you have the whole of the Amulet. Good. You may advance. '
'Does this mean I can go home to my wife, overdraft and O. B. E. ?'
'Certainly not. '
'I say, that's not cricket - I'm a British citizen, I command certain rights. I —'
'Shut up you posh twerp. I don't care it you're the Queen's uncle. You're going on. '
'Where to?'
'The Underwurlde. '
'Is Terry Wogan there?'
'English cretin. What's he got against the Irish?'



And so ended the last page of the Charles P Cohen diaries, which were found lying outside the cave of the Guardian by another poor fool had had passed through the Jungle on his way to the Underwurlde. He managed to Data Post it to us before so going.
Where are they now, these heroes? Hopping around in their suits of armour, no doubt, mapping books and diaries in hand. . .

A Crash Smash

B·O·U·L·D·E·R

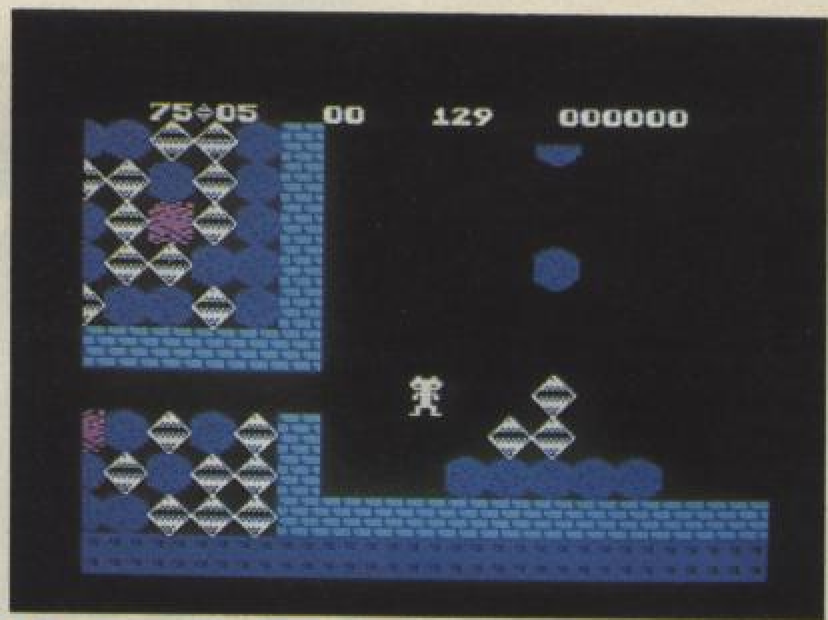
BOULDER DASH

Producer: **Front Runner**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**

Front Runner, the software marketing organisation of K-Tel, has here released an American program which has been converted for the Spectrum. It was originally a big hit in the States for **First Star** for the Atari. It is also a very unusual game, that relies on a simple concept with complex ramifications.

You play the starring role of Rockford, a gem collector in a series of 16 underground caverns, lettered A to P. You can elect to play from caves A, E, I or M on difficulty levels 1 to 3, or from A only on levels 4 and 5. Difficulty reflects on the number of jewels to be collected and the time limit allowed.

The basic game play is not unlike those 'Digger' games where you burrow through the earth dropping boulders on nasties, but that puts it all too simply. There are a great many combinations available between all the screens which uses elements of boulders, earth which can be removed, gems and several types of nasty which chase you. Removing the earth from under a boulder will cause it to fall down, but one boulder stacked on top of another will also topple off, so you must take great care, and of course this immediately adds a strategic element to the game. On one screen you have to create space for an amoeba to grow, then release a load of butterflies from a lower portion of the cave which turn to gem stones when they meet the amoebae – the problem being that the butterflies kill Rockford. This gives a simple example of what the game is like

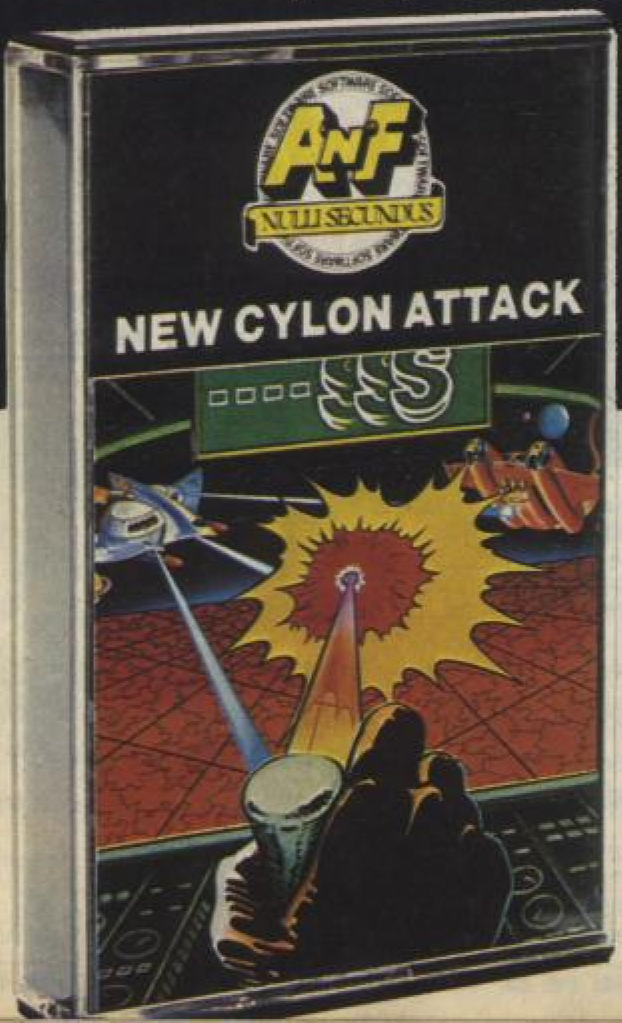


Rocks and Rocks for Rockford

Each cave is several times larger than the screen playing area and the screen automatically scrolls to keep pace with Rockford as he moves about, shovelling earth and moving boulders. Additionally there are four short interactive puzzles which you are entitled to play after completing caves D, H, L and P.

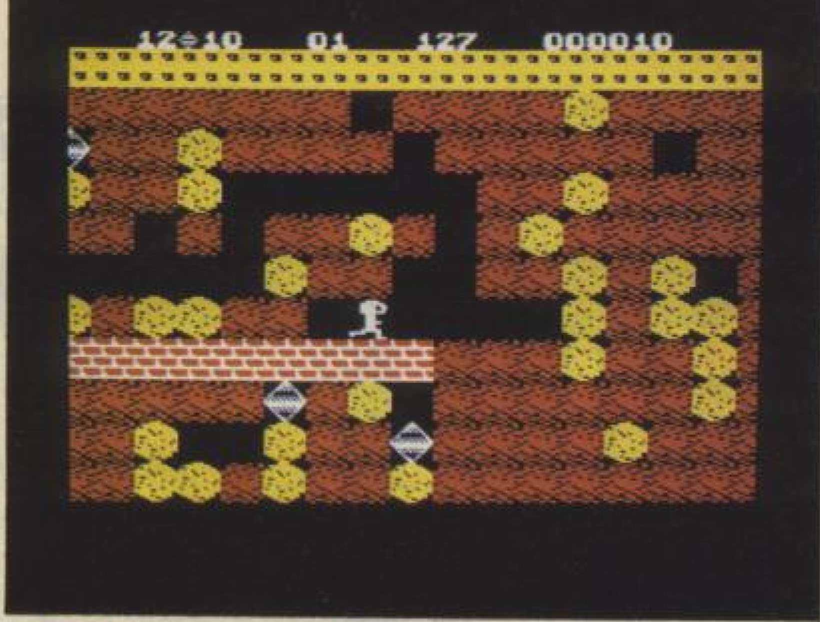
CRITICISM

● 'What a strange game this is at first, with no obvious connection to anything else I've ever seen. The idea is totally and completely original – a





D·A·S·H



Rockford makes bold dash!

wierd sense of strategy, forward planning and arcade skill are the qualities needed to play this game. If you don't possess one of these skills, then forget it. I found *Boulder Dash* immensely enjoyable, not because of its originality and wierd sense of humour, but because of its compulsive playing ideas. It's a long time since I've played a game as absorbing as this. You tend to get obsessed with it. Graphics are different, to say the least, bright and detailed. Sound is continuous with plenty of spot effects. An incredibly addictive game and well worth buying. Brill!'

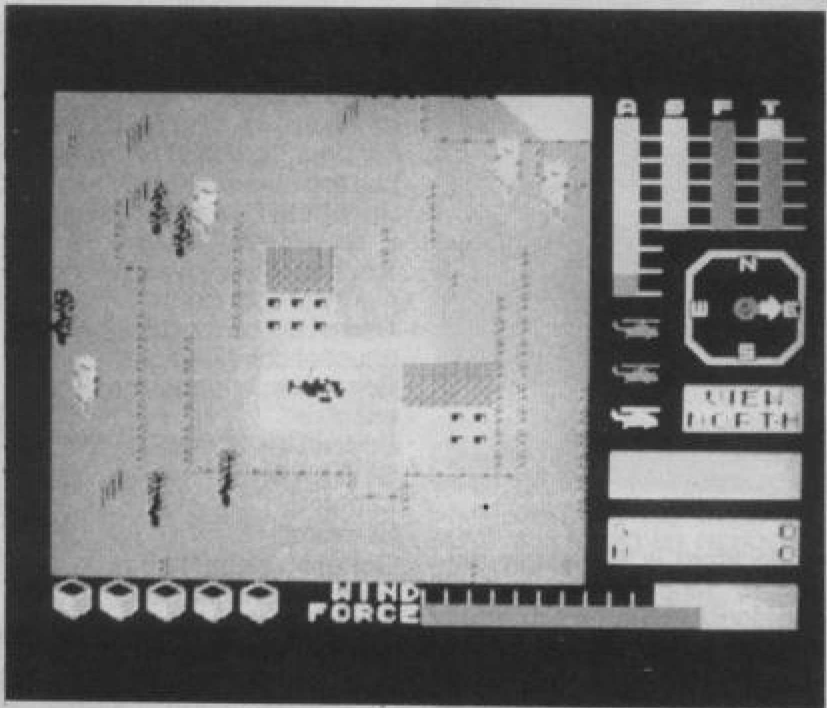
● *'Boulder Dash is aptly named! At first sight it looks like a number of other digging games and the graphics don't immediately strike you as extra special. Playing the game convinces otherwise. Within minutes I was sucked into it and hours went by.* Boulder Dash *is a brilliant program with a mean streak a mile wide in it. There is one particular room ('I' I think) which had me working for almost two hours without a break to beat its cruel sense of humour. Basically you release a piece of earth from a hole on top of a large chamber and for the next few seconds gems and boulders cascade down in a very realistic fashion. It is then a case of picking your way round to get at the gems without being squashed by a boulder. Very clever, amazingly, dangerously addictive,* Boulder Dash *should keep everyone going for ages and ages.'*

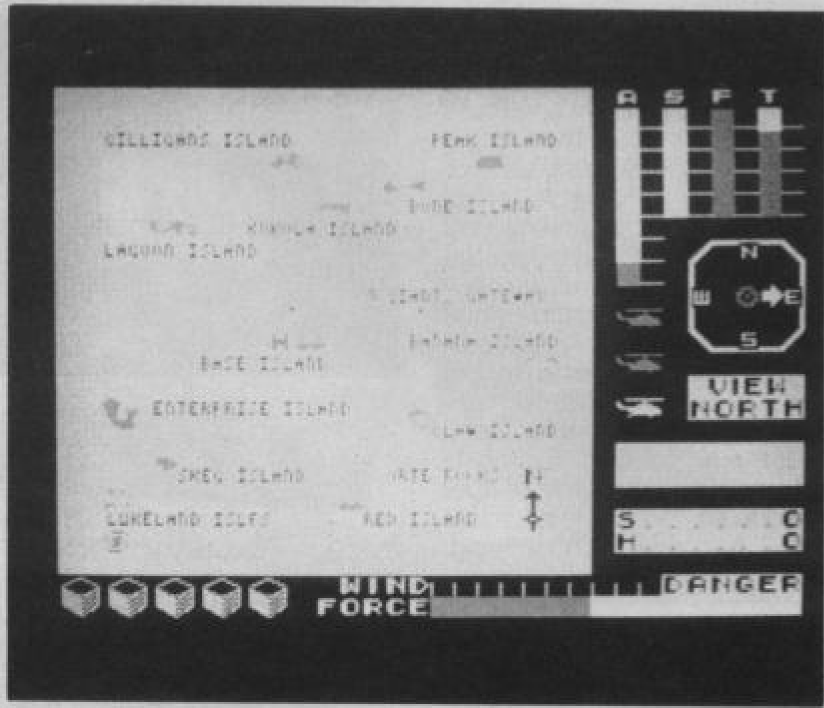
● 'This amazing game is so simple, it's ridiculous! Yet once started it's impossible to leave it. Rockford is amusingly animated, tapping his foot in boredom if you keep him standing still for too long, eyes flicking nervously, as well they might with all that weight of stone above his head! The movement of boulders and gems is so logical, when huge stacks of them fall that it can be a joy to watch. With the five skill levels and 16 screens to play through, this game represents good value even for the slightly high price, and I can recommend it to anyone. It's excellent and tremendously compelling to play.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: E, O/F, *K up/down, M, X/SYM, C left/right, N, V or B to fire, or use the cursors and Ø*
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Protek, AGF, Fuller
Keyboard play: responsive, plenty of options
Use of colour: excellent, very unusual combinations
Graphics: unusual, generally excellent
Sound: excellent
Skill levels: 5
Lives: 3
Screens: 16
General rating: highly addictive and playable, original and good value, highly recommended.

Use of computer	91%
Graphics	90%
Playability	98%
Getting started	89%
Addictive qualities	98%
Value for money	90%
Overall	93%





CYCLONE

Producer: **Vortex**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Costa Panayi**

Sequels are all the rage, and why not if they work well? Vortex here are following up their jet fighter 3D game *TLL*, but there are a few important differences to the former game. For a start off *Cyclone* features a helicopter (also the rage at the moment!) and you are not zapping round dots, but more usefully rescuing people from outlying islands and collecting valuable boxes by using the winch and cable from the helicopter.

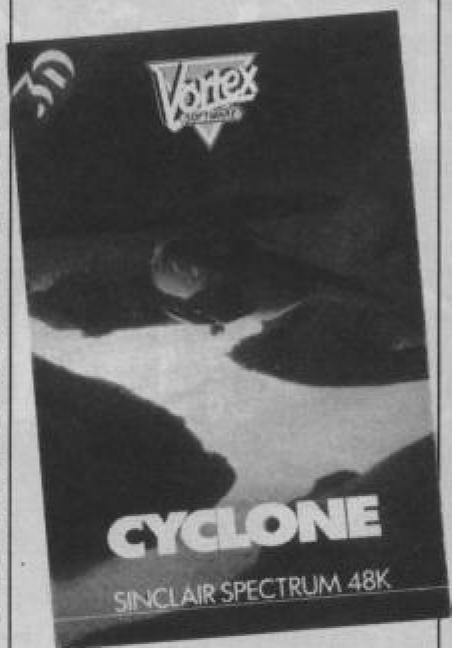
As in *TLL* the playing area is quite large and a map is provided, which shows the Base island set in the middle of a sea dotted with groups of small islands. Once again, author Costa Panayi has drawn in the detail with a blocky shaded 3D which describes the islands, the relief on them, the buildings, and the shadow of the machine itself on the ground.

Apart from the view of the playing area (which can be seen from the North or the South point of view as the player desires), there are the essential instruments done as bar codes which are an altitude indicator, speedometer, fuel and time left. There are also two other important indicators, one for aircraft and one for wind force. In *Cyclone* you will encounter low flying Jets (hanging around from the base in *TLL* no doubt) with which you may well collide. On the map a red cyclone can be seen weaving around the area. In its proximity the disturbance will affect handling of the helicopter and may cause you to crash. Winching up crates or people is done by centring the machine over the object and descending to a low level, wereupon the winch will automatically lower the cable and automatically collect the object.

CRITICISM

● '*Cyclone* sports may of *TLL*'s features such as the fab graphics but the main difference this time is that you fly a helicopter instead of a jet. The style of play is very similar to that of *TLL*. As sequels go I felt there wasn't enough difference between the two games to warrant your getting *Cyclone* if you've already got *TLL*, though *Cyclone* is still a good game within its own right. It's got all the makings of a fab game but in my opinion it is just not exciting enough – maybe the introduction of a fire button would have helped (I'm a sadist you see). Overall, a good game but lacks real advances over *TLL*.'

● *'After* TLL *my expectations were none too high for this latest release* Cyclone, *because I was one of those who though that the former game lacked in content and things to do. I was proved to be wrong* Cyclone *has much more content with plenty to keep you busy and interested for quite a while. Graphics seem to be an improvement over* TLL *with more 3D depth and shadowing. Normal and bright functions on the computer were hardly used to give the illusion of 3D, instead ink shadowing has been used and seems to work far better. The helicopter is well drawn and detailed. Rotor blades whizz round and give an excellent impression of rotating movement. One thing that I must say that has worked exceptionally well is the cyclone effect, giving your helicopter a rough ride. I like the addition of jets whizzing past you on occasion,*



although it can be confusing to know which way to go to avoid them. Colour and sound have been used realistically. Overall a far better game than TLL *with much more content and playability – a distinct improvement.'*

● 'The helicopter is very good, the way the rotors go, and it's very detailed, in particular the shadow on the surface of the sea or ground is excellent. I also like the way you have to wrestle with the controls when you are near the cyclone – very realistic. The use of the North and South views is useful, especially when boxes are hidden on a beach under a cliff, and this forces you to search for them a bit more. The graphics are very good and make playing the game more interesting. Collecting refugees and crates is actually more exciting than zapping dots was in *TLL*, but generally I don't think it is very addictive because there isn't enough action involved.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1/Q up/down, O/P left/right, X for forward, M for map
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, AGF, Protek
Keyboard play: very responsive, well positioned
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: excellent
Sound: very good
Skill levels: progressive difficulty
Lives: 3
Screens: scrolling
Special features:
General rating: considered to be more fun than *TLL* and very playable, but perhaps lacking a little in lasting appeal.

Use of computer	81%
Graphics	84%
Playability	76%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	81%
Overall	**79%**

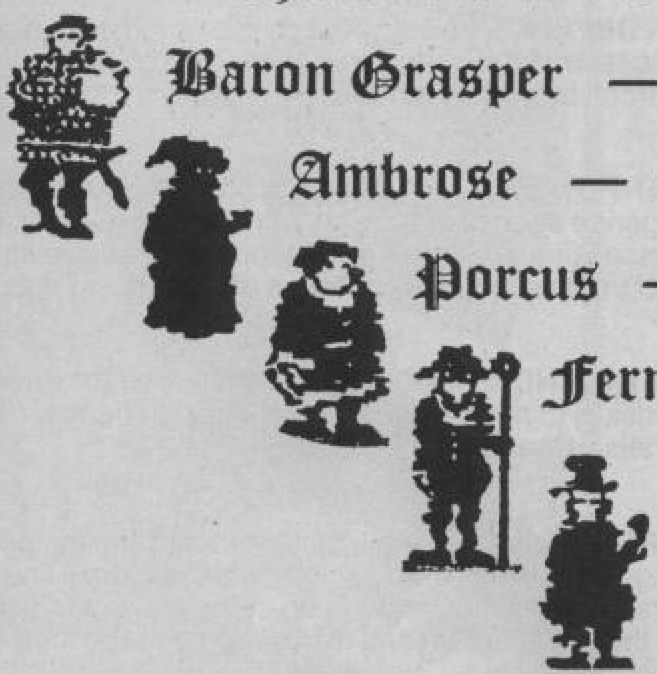
THE ADVENTURE EVENT OF THE YEAR BY

JOHN SHERRY

The Prince

WINNER OF THE 1984 CAMBRIDGE AWARD

Characters in order of Appearance:



Baron Grasper — a landowner

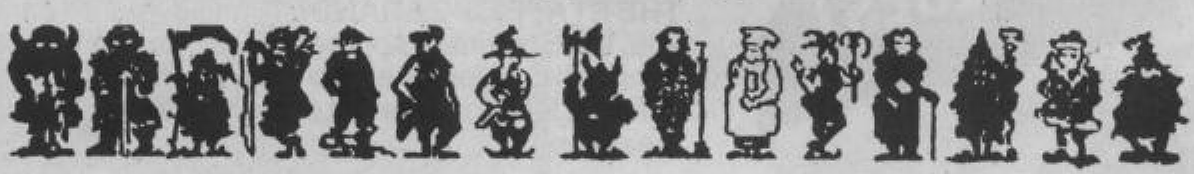
Ambrose — a cleric

Porcus — a merchant

Fernando — a tipstaff

Gamp — a stall holder

plus supporting cast



and finally

The Prince



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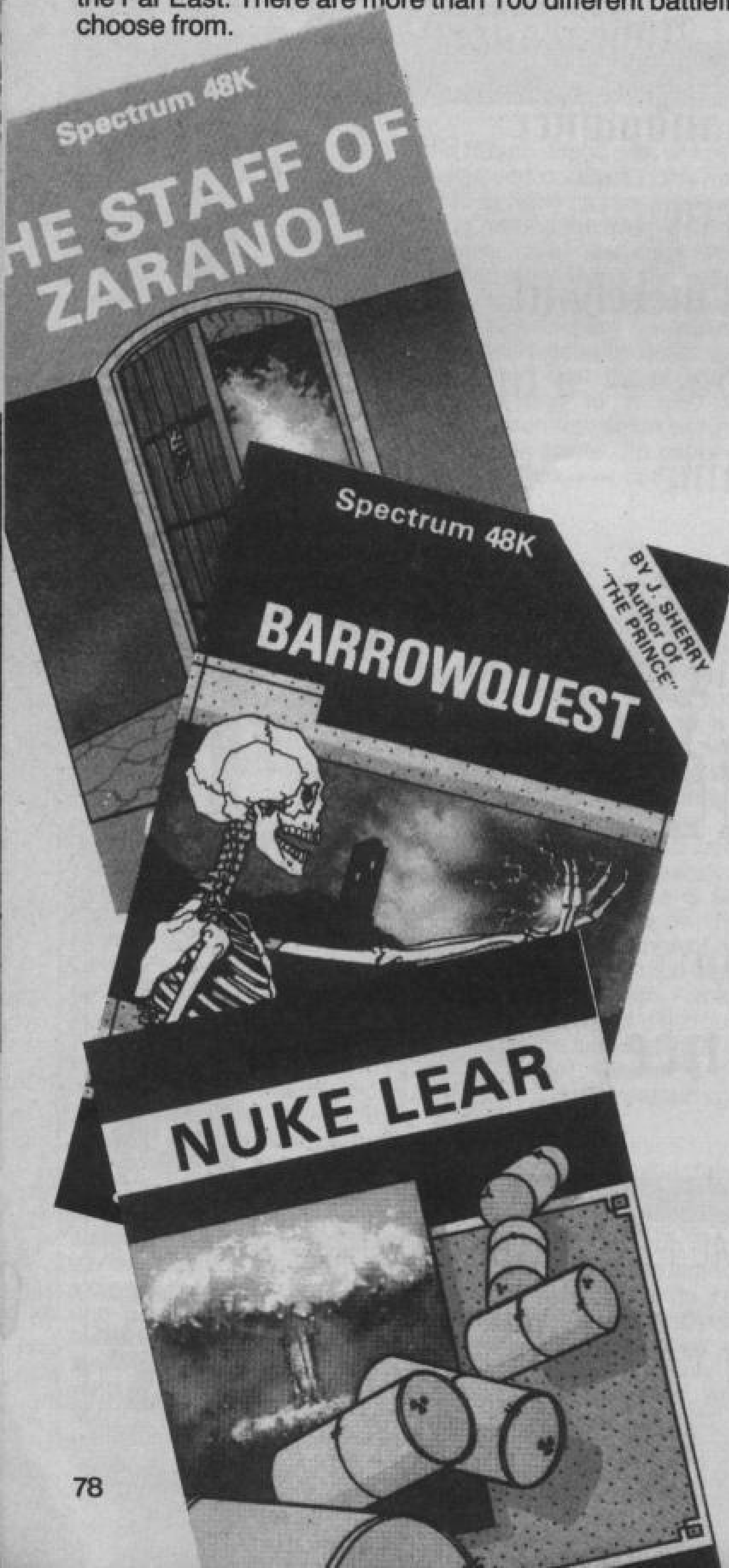
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C. C. S. have an exciting range of war, adventure and strategy games on the market at the moment. **INSURGENCY** is a wargame for two players, and simulates modern warfare in some of the world's hotest spots such as Central America or the Far East. There are more than 100 different battlefields to choose from.



In **AIR DEFENCE** you play the role of commander of Air Defences, and the objective is to fend off attacks on your squadrons by enemy aircraft.

SUPERPOWER is for 1 – 6 players, each of whom runs the intelligence agency of a major world power. Coups, espionage and assassination are all part of the game as you struggle to protect your assets in a continent of developing countries.

BLUE RIBAND simulates the controls of a motor-ferry, and your task is to navigate the vessel through narrow river channels using the ship's radar.

THE PRINCE is a strategy game for four players, pitting their wits against no less than 17 computer 'players'. The computer generates difficulties and it is up to the players to conspire to solve them; deception and skullduggery make for a machiavellian-type atmosphere.

THE STAFF OF ZARANOL is an adventure game in which you, the Sorcerer's apprentice, release an evil demon. Can you banish him before the return of your master? There are 45 different locations, severl containing clues to help you capture the demon.

BARROWQUEST features Grimblast, a black wizard, and Sartrak, a white wizard, battling for possession of a Power Gem known as Sartrak's Stone. Grimblast and his clan have captured the stone, and the task of Sartrak is to recover it.

In **1942 MISSION** you are in the shoes of a British Agent whose objective is to penetrate a German camp and make off with the secret Rocket Fuel plans. You begin by parachuting into Germany.

NUKE LEAR and **TOMB OF AKHENATEN** are two games in the 'Charlie Charlie Sugar' budget range. *Nuke Lear* involves storing drums of nuclear waste for safety. But beware, some of them have a tendency to fall into illegal caves where they will contaminate the environment. In *Akhenaten* you are the seeker after the lost treasure of the Pharoah Akhenaten, venturing into the labyrinth of tunnels beneath the pyramid. Look out for the Spirit of the labyrinth!



G	H	J	E	Y	S	K	B	D	V	S	Q	R	I	P	L	D	R	F	2
F	L	O	I	N	S	U	R	G	E	N	C	Y	Q	U	O	A	L	L	4
T	Y	U	W	I	P	J	L	S	H	Q	C	N	K	B	E	S	A	H	9
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INSURGENCY
AIR DEFENCE
SUPERPOWER
BLUE RIBAND
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THE STAFF OF ZARANOL
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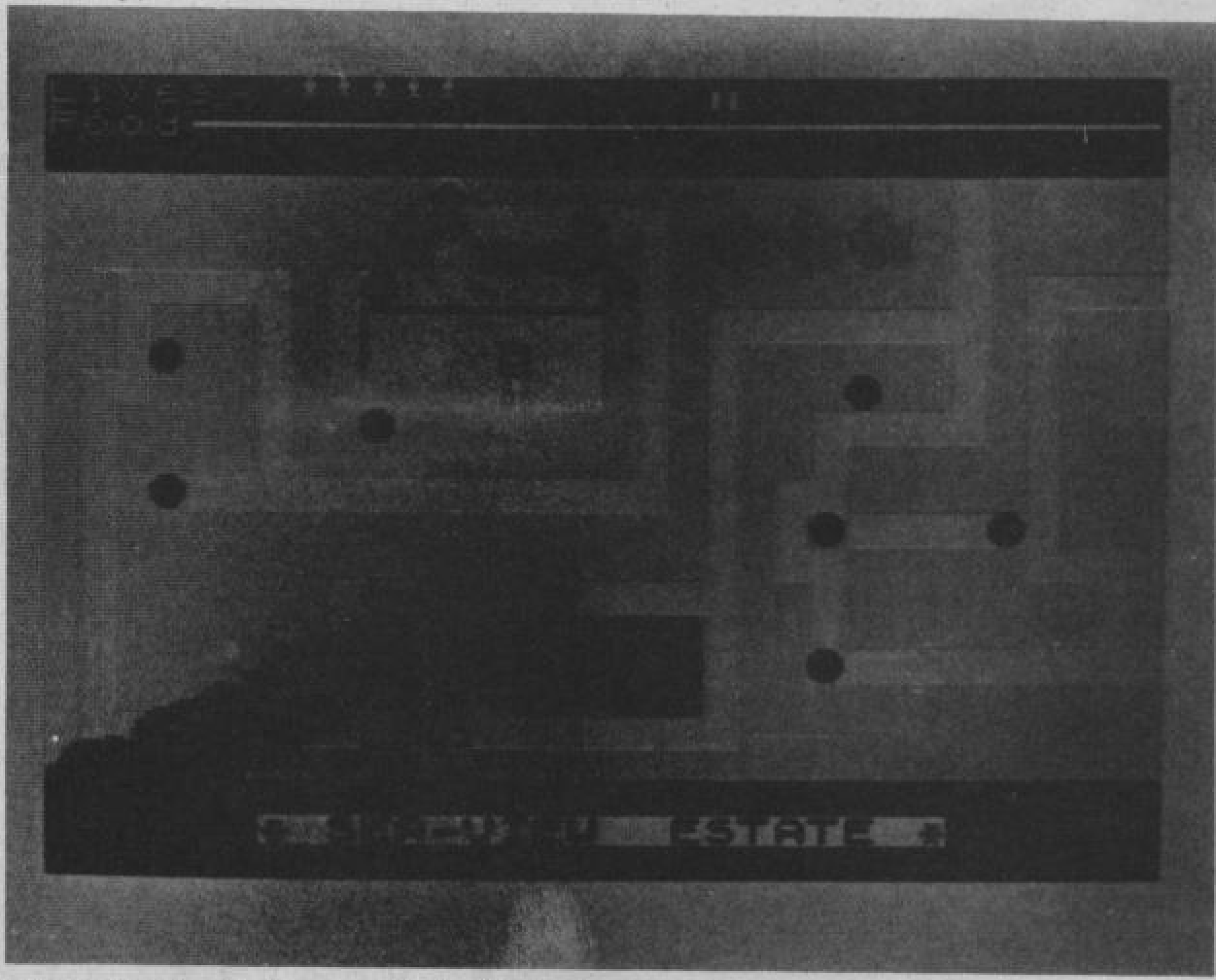
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VOLCANO

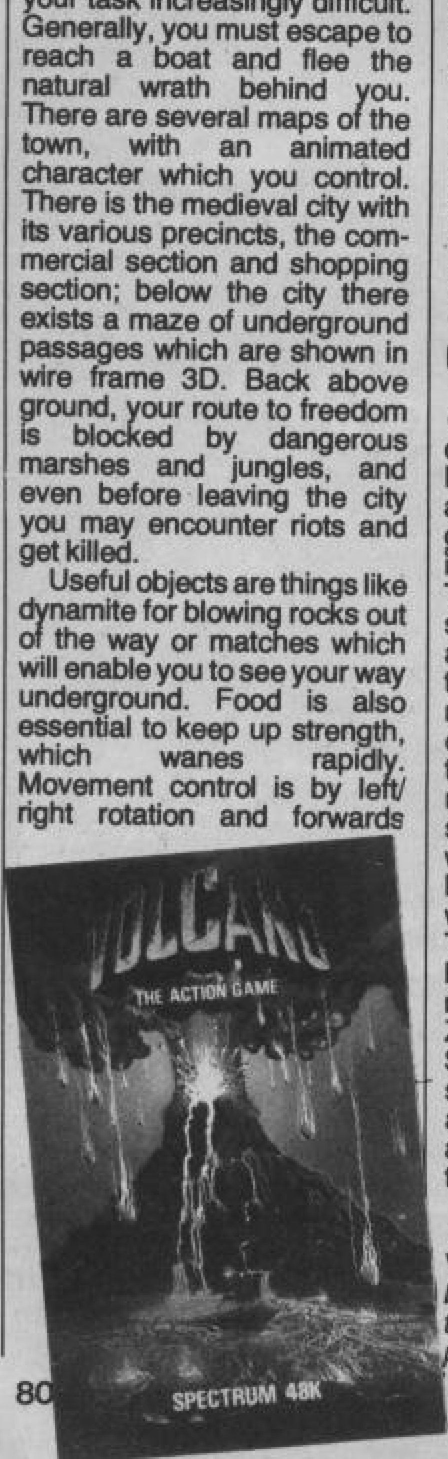
Producer: **Computer Magic**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**

The object of *Volcano* is to escape from an errupting – well, volcano. The game is quite different because it involves many different elements across forty screens above ground and over 290 below ground.

In a sense it is a giant graphic adventure, where you control your man, guiding him around the streets of the threatened town, seeking useful objects from the buildings. Falling molten rocks are shown as red blobs which appear on the mapscapes, while rivers of red lava slowly engulf the roadways, making your task increasingly difficult. Generally, you must escape to reach a boat and flee the natural wrath behind you. There are several maps of the town, with an animated character which you control. There is the medieval city with its various precincts, the commercial section and shopping section; below the city there exists a maze of underground passages which are shown in wire frame 3D. Back above ground, your route to freedom is blocked by dangerous marshes and jungles, and even before leaving the city you may encounter riots and get killed.

Useful objects are things like dynamite for blowing rocks out of the way or matches which will enable you to see your way underground. Food is also essential to keep up strength, which wanes rapidly. Movement control is by left/right rotation and forwards below ground, with four way movement above ground. Whilst perambulating below the surface, it is well to remember that above ground the volcano is still errupting, blocking the town's streets with debris.

Volcano has a random element built into the program so that, except for the first three screens, dynamite, lava, rocks, food and ropes will rarely appear in the same place twice. Scoring is done by time alive.



CRITICISM

● '*Volcano* is a totally different type of game. I can honestly say I haven't played anything like it before. As a game it isn't mega-brill, but it isn't mega-asterisks either. The graphics are simple but serve their purpose. The attraction of this game is that there is a lot to it, there are numerous screens to be discovered. *Volcano* is quite fun to play, but I did find it a bit repetetive after a while. It has some nice features such as, when you die it tells you how long you've been playing, while playing a catchy tune. The 3D underground maze looks uncannily like those 3D mazes you used to get from ZX81 games and some early Spectrum games, but this stage becomes very repetetive and boring after a while. Overall quite a good game but I think it's got limited appeal.'

● *'The main appeal of* Volcano *lies in its sheer size, because the graphics are not the sort that make you want to play compulsively. Again, despite its size, you are confronted quite quickly by the inescapable fact that it's all been seen before on a smaller scale. The linked screens of the town make a large maze, where you waste time by going off the screen on a road only to find that it's a dead end on the next one. Herein lies the meat of the game, getting around fast enough before the ways are blocked to get all the things you need to survive. I found* Volcano *was quite playable but not addictive. Sheer size of a program isn't what makes a winner, and when you get down to it there isn't enough going on in the game to offer lasting appeal.*

● 'Strange game this. It seems to have a mixture of adventure and strategy and a good memory is required. The game seems to be of a very old type, according to the graphics, although essentially they are adequate. Many points of this game are unfair; one major example is when you fall down a hole into the underground passageways. If you are lucky, you will get three matches to enable you to see the map that you collect when you fall down the hole. This map shows you the way to the exit and also the starting position, but unfortunately, and unfairly, it doesn't show you your present position, so in many cases it is totally useless. Lighting a match enables you to see the map for approximately five seconds – hardly enough time to focus on the map, sum up where the start and finish positions are, and then guess where you are. I'm sure this part of the game requires you to have a photographic memory, not very helpful for 99.99 of the players. If you have unfortunately fallen down one of these holes you seemingly need no food, which now means unless you find your way out of this impossible maze of tunnels, you'll be doomed to stay there for the rest of your life (unless you turn the computer off). Perhaps this over-priced game should be re-written to allow for the novice player to have much more fun while playing this game – a quit key would be most useful.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right (above ground), 6/8 rotate left/right, 7 move forwards (below ground), C = collect, E = eat, X = explode dynamite, r = swing on rope
Joystick: not stated
Keyboard play: not over responsive, but well laid out
Use of colour: average
Graphics: small, simple, below average
Sound: good tune
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens: 330 plus
General rating: a very large game, but generally below average, especially at the price.

Use of computer	54%
Graphics	44%
Playability	49%
Getting started	60%
Addictive qualities	46%
Value for money	33%
Overall	**45%**



POLE POSITION

Producer: **Atarisoft**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Language: **machine code**

At last, the long-awaited Spectrum version of one of the most famous arcade originals ever – Atari's 'Pole Position'. There were rumours earlier in the year that Atarisoft had released the game. It was seen at the Earls Court Computer Fair in September and almost immediately withdrawn after unfavourable comment from critics present.

The track picture is recognisably that of the arcade original, with the alternating red and white stripes on the road side, striped centre line, moving hills in the background and a long perspective which has the road moving from side to side depending on the car's position on it. Road signs also echo the original and provide a danger to those who go off the road.

You're up against lots of other racers on the road. The game commences from the start grid with a countdown. First you must qualify – 90 seconds in which you must achieve a lap time of better than 73 seconds to get onto the real race. If you hit another car or a hazard you explode and this loses you precious time. No matter how many times you crash you receive another car until the qualifying time has run out.

Control includes left and right, brake and change of gears between hi and low. Scoring is by lap speed and 50 points per car passed.

CRITICISM

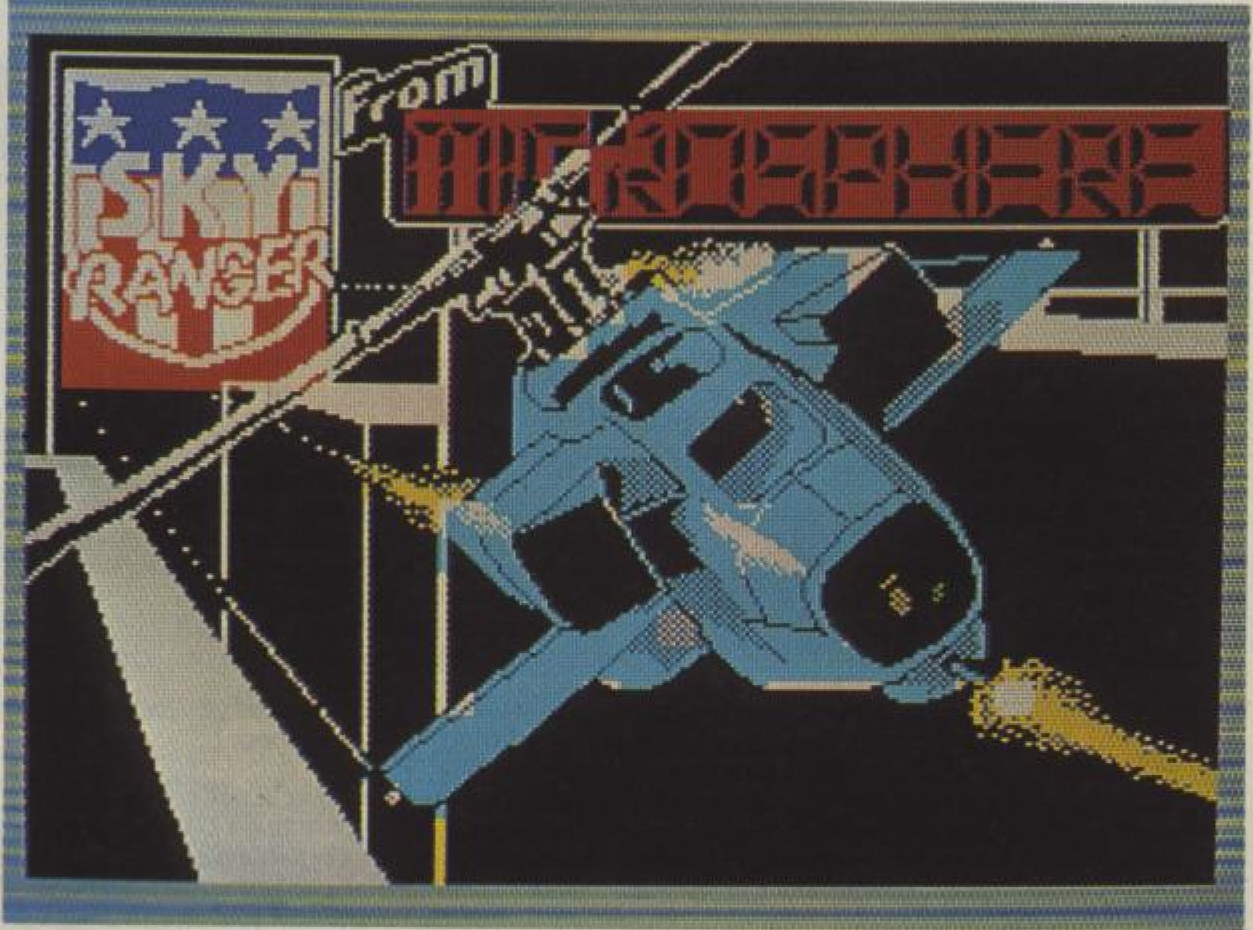
● 'It seems ironical that the original game that has inspired so many versions on the Spectrum should be the last to appear (at least I expect it's the last – there may be more sophisticated versions to arrive yet)! It also means that Atarisoft have a big job on their hands because a few of the versions have been excellent (*Full Throttle* for instance). *Pole Position* has managed to look very like the arcade original, which is good, but it doesn't play anything like as well. Perhaps this isn't surprising, but I thought the control of the car, overall, was a bit rough. The inlay has strategy tips on how to use gears, brakes and the inside lane wherever possible, but this isn't reflected in what you see on the screen. The road, for instance, scrolls past at the same speed, whatever speed your car is doing, which isn't very realistic; and I thought the car handling was a bit sluggish, whereas in the original it was very skittish, and therefore more exciting. The graphics are of a high standard, especially your vehicle, and generally *Pole Position* is enjoyable.'

● *'At last, it's arrived! Since spring I've been waiting to see this game when it was first advertised – nearly eleven months later, I'm actually playing it. Was it worth it, you might say? Well, it's the first racing game I've seen with multi-coloured graphics that work and decent sized computer controlled cars to race against. 3D prespective is pretty good, I like the way the colours of the race track alternate from red to white to give an impression of movement. I'd hardly call this game 'Pole Position' though, because it is only a race track and doesn't go through the various scenarios as arcade 'Pole Position' does. I can't see the point of having a speedometer in this game because no matter how high your speed is, the ground pregresses at the same speed that you started at. the only difference being that you slide further on corners. I don't really think it was worth the eleven month wait, as in that time several other racing games have appeared that are equally good, if not better, and besides, it is totally over-priced.'*

● 'The 3D effect in *Pole Position* is quite pleasing with the multi-coloured mountains in the background creating a sense of space, and the road disappears satisfactorily. But the 3D animation of the other cars is a little bit jerky – signposts seem to hang around rather a long while before finally flashing past. On the other hand they are all very detailed, which makes it difficult to animate fully. Car control is not over-responsive – or perhaps it would be more fair to say that the track doesn't seem to respond as well as your car movement! It also seems a shame that it takes so long to accelerate – surely this vehicle

SKY RANGER

Producer: **Microsphere**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**



There is a grafitti artist in Microsphere's *Skool Daze* who writes on the blackboard something to the effect that 'Sky Ranger is great' – a neat piece of pre-publicity for their second release. *Sky Ranger* is a helicopter. We've remarked before in CRASH how odd it is that software companies tend to have similar ideas at the same time, and there are a few helicopter scenarios around or in the pipeline.

Sky Ranger is situated in a large city full of skyscrapers, which allows for plenty of wire frame 3D. The 3D used here, however, is rather more complex than in most previous games of the type, and generally, the graphics are quite different from other Microsphere games.

The scenario plays heavily on old computer names, somewhat bastardised over the intervening years. It seems there will be a time when 'Watchers' will be placed in the skies of the city, servants, friends in the fight to make the city safe. The people will even give them nicknames, calling them after the primitive 20th century computers that delighted the children so much in the museums.

But soon the Rics and the Drags, the Dores and the Trums will have enforced crime so successfully that they will turn to enforcing the lesser offences. Then they will discover the city archives – still packed with ancient and never-repealed laws. The 'Watchers' have been programmed to enforce the law – and the city lives in fear...

Your mission is to seek out and destroy the Watchers using your electronic pulse generator.

The screen contains a view from the helicopter of the city streets. To the left and below the viewscreen are the instruments. These include the ubiquitous fuel gauge, and the machine uses it quite quickly. there are five fuel dumps in the city which can be visited once each during a game. As the city is near the sea and fogs swirl in rapidly, a ceiling gauge shows the height of the cloud level. There is also an altitude meter and a speedo. Centrally placed is the all important compass and close range radar on which the Watchers appear. A five letter band indicates your proximity to a fuel dump, with the appropriate letter flashing. Destroying Watchers is done by firing when they are in the centre of the vid screen and the target indicator flashes red.

There are various skill levels which are accessed as in *Wheelie* through codes gained by completing a level. One aspect which makes the game harder is that the viewscreen is vulnerable to contact with buildings or watchers, and easily becomes cracked. These cracks remain with you during a game, making it increasingly harder to see where you are flying.

CRITICISM

● 'Sky Ranger takes 3D perspective down to a land's eye view as opposed to a bird's eye view. Flying through and over and around skyscrapers of varying heights is quite fun, seeing the well drawn line graphics whizz past you, and mastering the skills of flying round tight corners and reacting instantaneously to what you might find round them. I was a little surprised to find a game produced by Microsphere that had a lack of content. Flying around a city trying to locate and destroy the Watchers, is not my idea of fantastic fun. Okay, you have to refuel now and again, but that's not such a big deal. If you collide with a watcher, part of your screen cracks and shatters like a cobweb, very realistic indeed. But if you crash into the ground or into a skyscraper, you get one or two whacking big zig zag lines from the top to the bottom of the screen, and this makes life quite disconcerting, trying to seek and destroy with these huge lines down the centre of the screen. I would have thought it would have been quite adequate to just have the shattered cobweb effect, as this doesn't really destroy your vision but gives a nice effect. Not one of Microsphere's most entertaining games, I think they should stick to original ideas with wonderful graphics.'

● *'While first playing this game I was amazed to see an unthoughtful layout of the screen – it was cluttered and untidy, and difficult to make out what various instruments were and what they were used for. One thing Microsphere have always managed is to have a tidy looking screen. There's no doubting the quality of the 3D graphics – the black line on a yellow ground with hidden lines masked out makes for a very realistic*

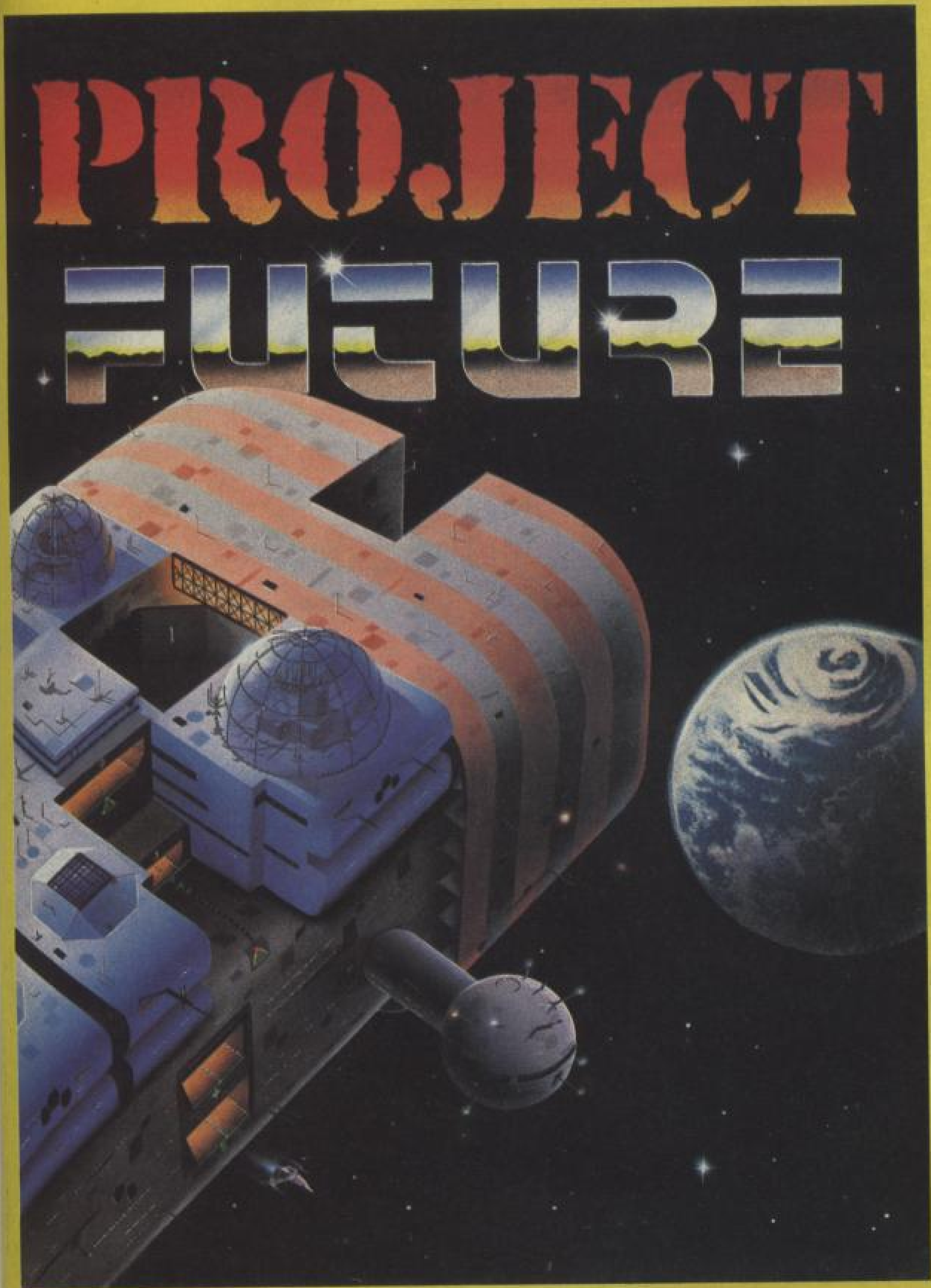
Pole Position

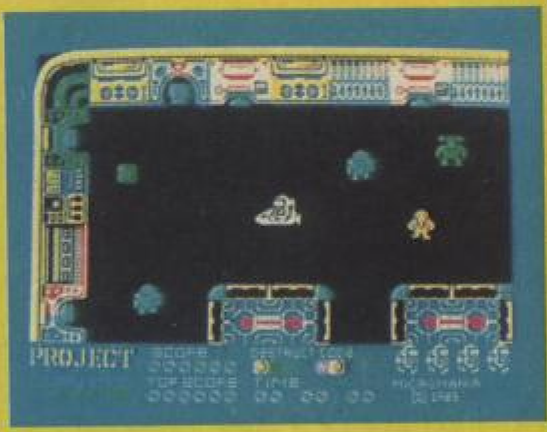
would never qualify on a real track!? More could have been made of the use of gears for speed and control than has been. Overall, quite a good race track game, but spoiled by the exceptionally high price tag – still, at least it isn't the £15 we originally feared it would be.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Q to brake, A to change gear, or use the cursor keys
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: very good, attribute problems kept to a minimum
Use of colour: good 3D effect, detailed and large
Graphics: bit clicky, nothing special, nice tune
Sound: progressive difficulty
Skill levels: N/A
Lives: 1
Special features: above average, but pricey.
General rating: 80

Use of computer	80%
Graphics	80%
Playability	71%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	52%
Value for money	49%
Overall	68%







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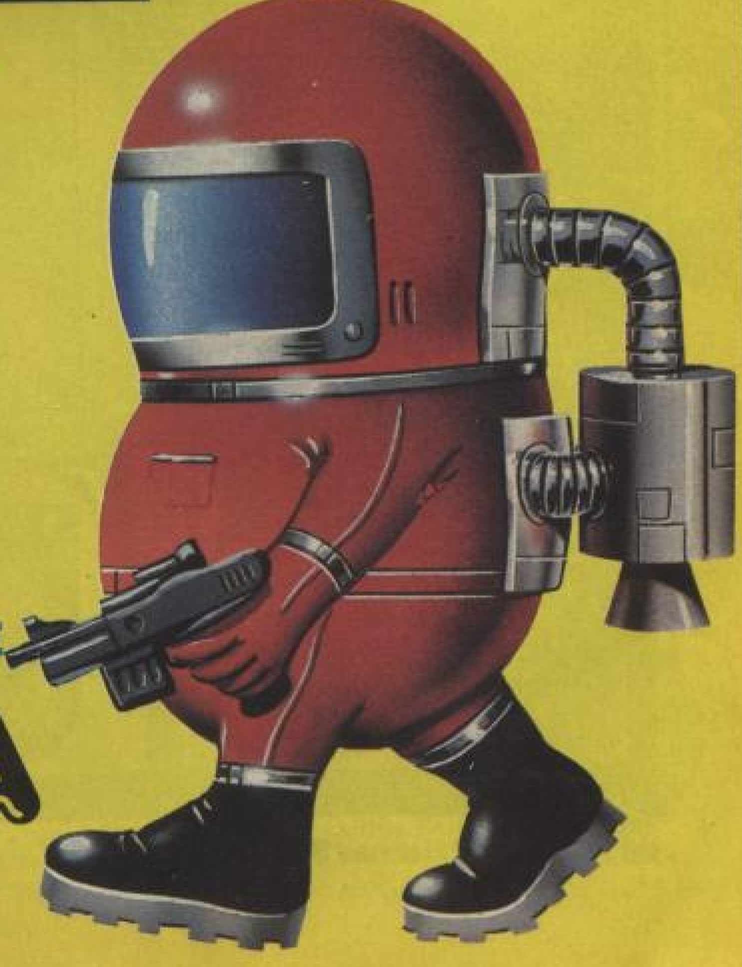
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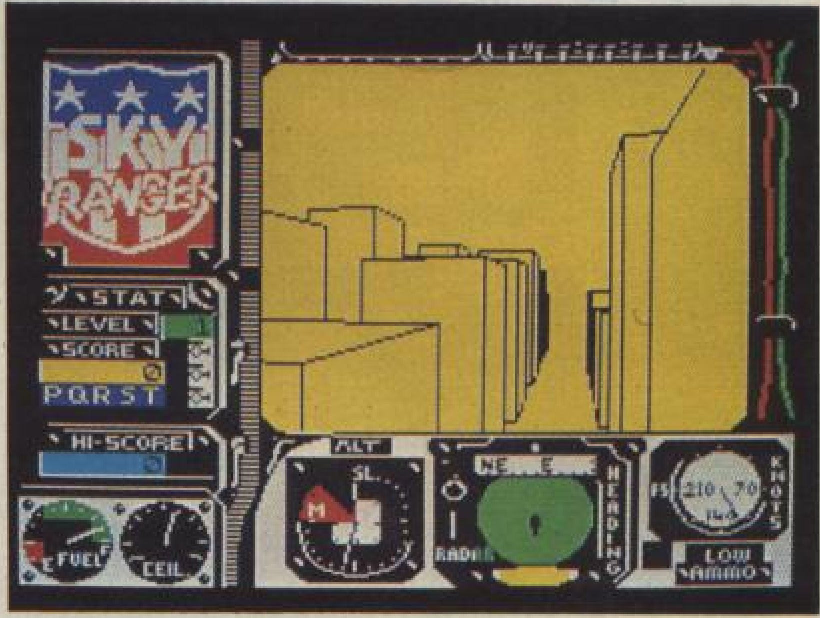
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effect, and instead of the usual few scattered towers, here we have the feeling of flying through a real city. The real problem is that the game starts to pall after a while. Once the novelty of the graphics has become familiar you start to long for more action, and it is here that the game lacks somewhat. The 'Watchers' are not all that frequent, and although they will dash at you, they do not fire or protect themselves. Great graphics, but a bit thin on plot – surprising for Microsphere.'

● 'This is the first game that Microsphere have produced that has line graphics. As one would expect, the line graphics are drawn efficiently and quickly to produce skyscraper style trenches and 3D perspective. The known features of this game are night flying, fog, which blanks out the details and descends quite rapidly at times (usually when you could well do without it). It is quite fun to fly about through the skyscraper corridors trying to track down 'Watchers' and destroy them. On the higher levels, 'Watchers' become more intelligent and more abundant. A high degree of skill is needed to get rid of them. I like the way that your windscreen is cobwebbed with cracks if you should hit a 'Watcher', but I found the large cracks that appear if you hit the ground too hard, or a building, begin to get in the way of the game. Overall quite a good flying game that maybe requires a bit more content to make it top notch.'

COMMENTS

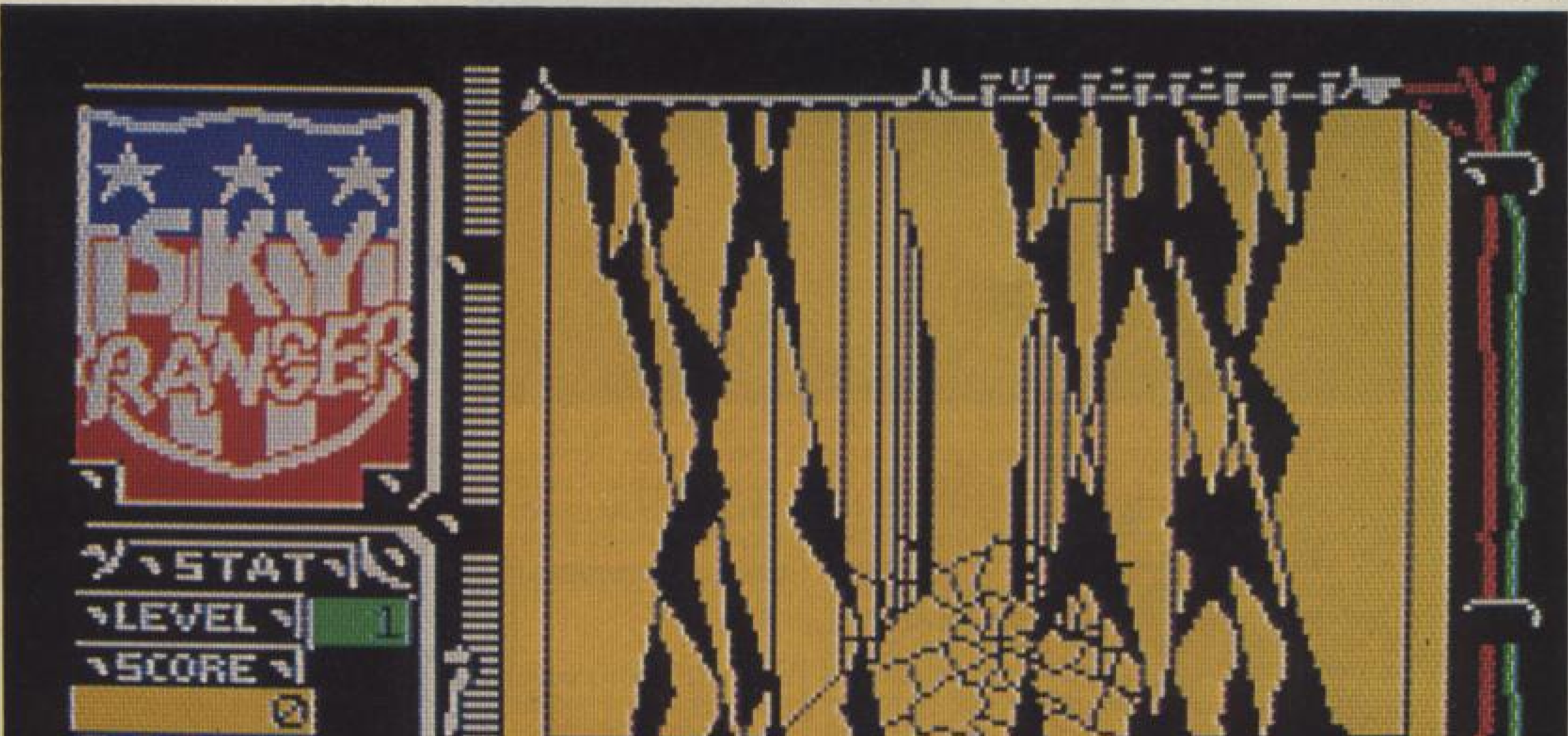
Control keys: user definable, preset are: CAPS to V/B to SPACE left/right, Y to P/H to ENTER up/down, Q to T/A to G faster/slower, 1 to Ø to fire
Joystick: almost any via UDK
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: sensible and avoids attribute problems
Graphics: excellent 3D detail, oddly untidy on the instruments
Sound: not much, mostly a sound for the helicopter speed
Skill levels: progressive with access codes



Lives: percentage of damage
Screens: 1
Special features:
General rating: above average for content, very good for graphics, perhaps a disappointment coming from Microshpere, but still a good flying game.

Use of computer	**81%**
Graphics	**79%**
Playability	**65%**
Getting started	**73%**
Addictive qualities	**58%**
Value for money	**69%**
Overall	**71%**

A much damaged chopper, but still flying.



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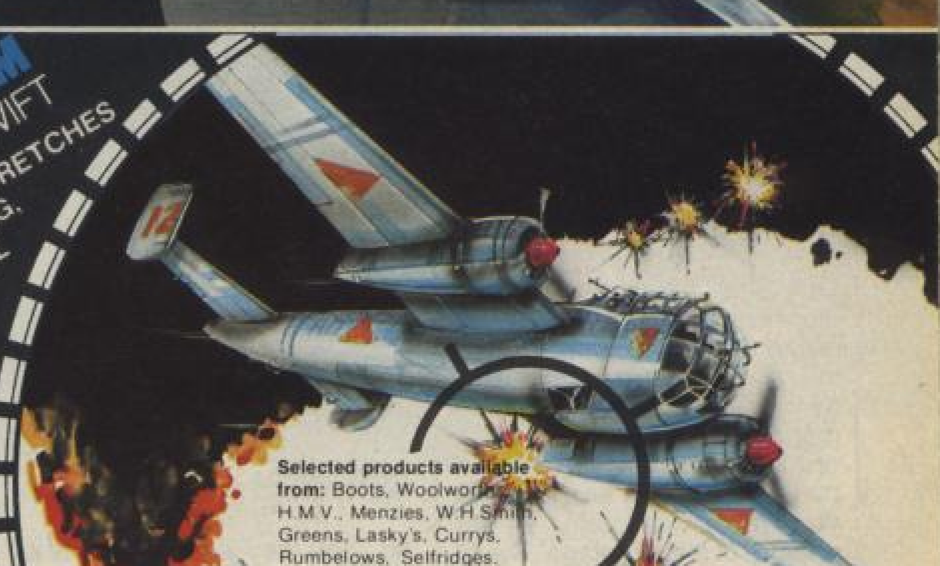


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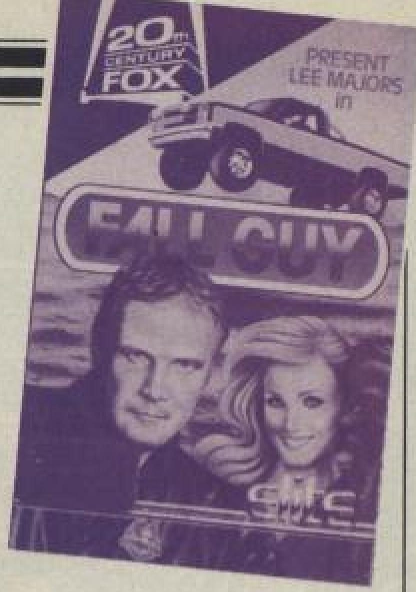
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FALL GUY

Producer: **Elite Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**

Anyone who ever saw the oddball movie starring Peter O'Toole called *Stuntman* will have guessed that a film stuntman's life is neither safe nor easy. Elite's *Fall Guy*, the officially licenced version of the Warner Brothers TV series of the same name, could actually be regarded as a truer reflection of stunting than the series on which it is based!
You play Lee Majors playing Colt Seavers in a series of stunt situations. The scenario is simple enough. The film has a limited budget, and every second wasted means more money lost. You get five lives, or 'takes' to put it in film parlance, and on each screen you must complete a set amount of shot 'footage'. As all the scenes incorporate the act of jumping from one thing to another, this means that enough footage is 'in the can' when you have leapt 15 times. Should you fail, and have to go for another 'take', you pick up 'footage-wise' (as they say in Burbank) where you left off.
The action opens with the famous 'jumping from a bridge onto a fast moving train' scene, which Colt Seavers can do with both arms tied behind his back and his eyes closed. Usually, when this is done, the train is exiting the tunnel/bridge when you jump onto it. What makes life tricky in *Fall Guy* is that the action is reversed, so as soon as you have successfully landed on the roof of a carriage, you must start to run like hell to keep from being smashed into the bridge. To make life more difficult there is a bird flapping around by the bridge, which gets in the way of the leaps. Once 15 carriages have been successfully leapt, the scene dissolves to the next. A sort of repeat except that the goods train carriages are going the other way, so you must run towards the jumping position to stay on screen. Further scenes include leaping onto moving boats, tanks etc.



They're much easier to catch at the station . . .

CRITICISM

● 'You may wonder, well is it anything like the TV series – the answer is yes, in a way. The idea couldn't have been simpler, just jump and land in the right places while avoiding flying objects (I think they're ducks)! That may sound easy but on each screen a different technique for jumping/timing is required. Graphics are all large, cheerful in colour and detailed. All the moving graphics do so in a smooth, flicker-free action, and not at any slow pace either. Great tunes. *Fall Guy* seems to have plenty of playability in it, but I thought just jumping, timing and jumping again isn't very compulsive content for me. More likey to be a success with younger games players.'

● *'Elite have certainly worked very hard with the graphics in* Fall Guy, *because there are 30 screens, all varied, all animated with large, detailed pictures. Your man is a massive leaper too. A sophisticated degree of jumping control is possible, as the longer you keep the key pressed, the further he jumps. In play, the game is very simple really. It is one of those that requires a rhythmic memory, since repeated timing is of the essence. This means that completing a screen can become quite easy, but moving onto the next is another matter, since all your rhythms are thrown out. Despite its simplicity, and because of the great graphics, I found* Fall Guy *fun to play and remarkably addictive. Pity it has to be £1 too much, and I wonder if all these licenced games are having to add so much to afford the royalties for the licence?'*

● 'I never thought very much of the TV series, because I can't stand Lee Majors, which puts you at a disadvantage in reviewing a game based on the series. However, your man looks nothing like him, thank goodness, so that got that out of the way! There's not much to the game content, but what there is, is clever stuff, and difficult. Marvellous, detailed and often humourous graphics make for high playability, and I enjoyed the game very much. However I don't think it has that much lasting appeal because of the lack of content. It's true that you have to be able to change pace and jumping style from screen to screen, and there are a lot of them, but in the end the fun palls with the repetition of ideas. Good but not great, and a trifle expensive too.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z or M/X or SYM SHIFT left/right, Ø or 1 = jump
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Cursor type
Keyboard play: responsive, simple operation and well laid out for left or right hands
Use of colour: excellent, very varied
Graphics: excellent, large, smooth and detailed
Sound: very good tunes with on/off facility
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens: 30
General rating: a game with good playability, but lacking in addictivity.

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	80%
Playability	81%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	72%
Value for money	74%
Overall	76%

FAST ACTION FOR YOUR SPECTRUM

Can your computer hold out?



STAGECOACH

A western action game for your Spectrum which really does provide something quite different and exciting.
You are Kidd Rivers, the hero of the game and you must leap aboard the runaway stage and guide it safely over the plains and through the treacherous mountains. Then just as you thought you were safe, fight off the attacking Indians.



BLACK HAWK

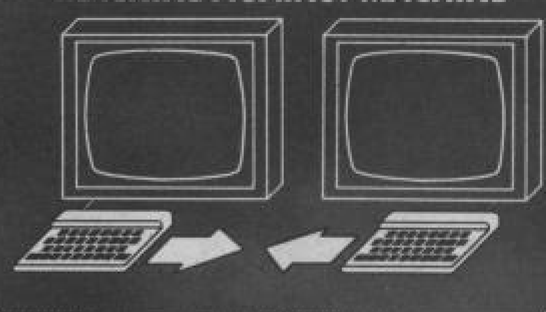
You're flying the world's deadliest aircraft, however it would appear that your Command Centre has just sent you on the world's deadliest mission.
The ultimate in strategic action. This 100% machine code game offers the player two full graphic scrolling screens with over 30 levels of play.



DELTA WING

Delta Wing is an advanced flight combat simulator. It has been designed to give an excellent 'feel' for the tumble and roll of high speed flight. With 15 separate controls to monitor and incoming enemy planes to be dealt with, this program takes you and your Spectrum to the limits.
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MACHINE AGAINST MACHINE



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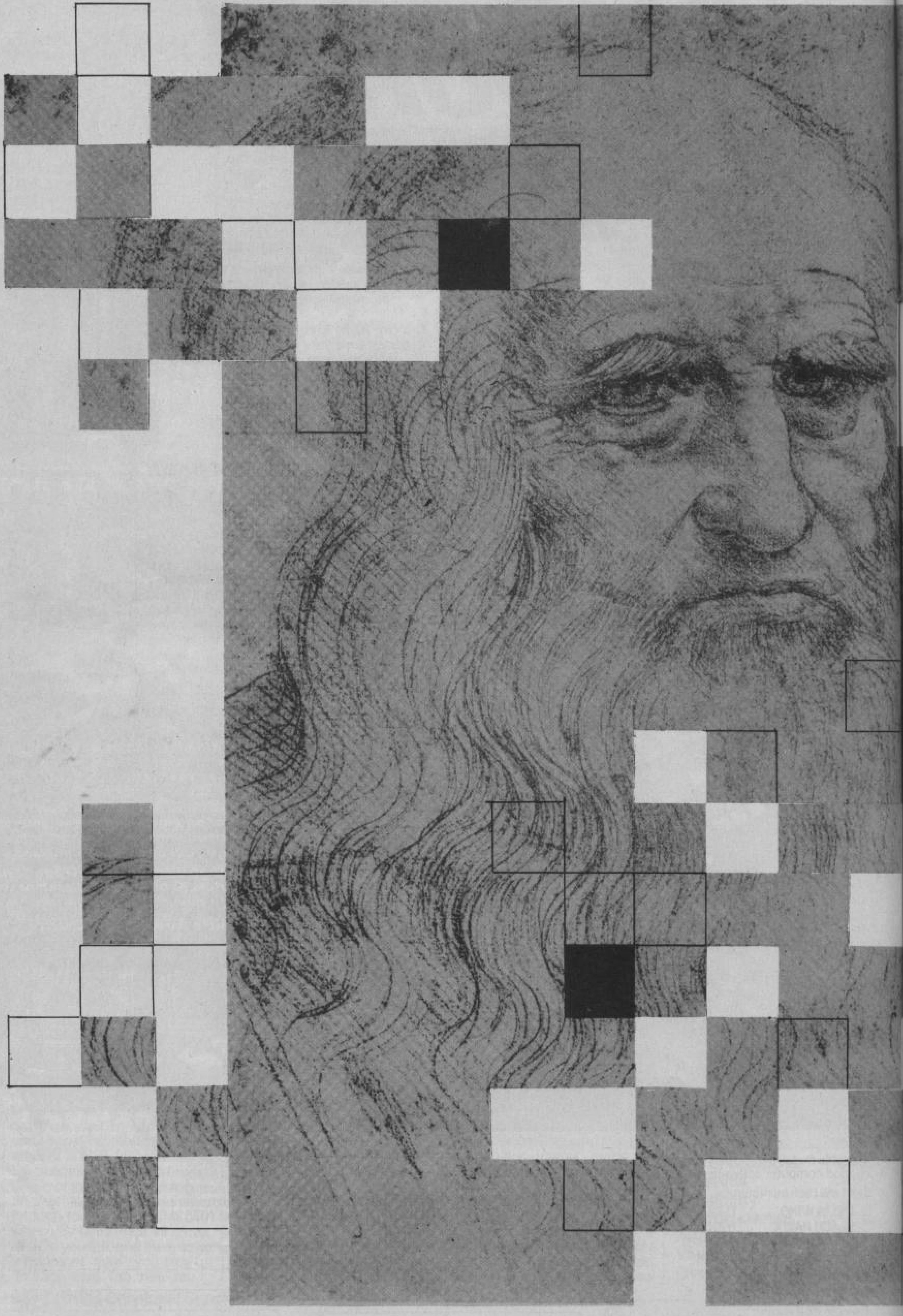
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Leonardo

CALLING ALL ARTISTS!!

Crash Competition

PRIZES AND CATEGORIES

For the overall winner there is a professional **Devilbiss Airbrush** complete with low noise compressor, hoses and inks (worth over £330), *plus* a **Datapen** light pen.

The winner of **Category One** receives a **Rotring Isographic Drawing Pen Set** (worth £57), and an **A2 size drawing board with stand**, and a **Datapen** light pen.

For the winner of **Category Two** there is a **Touchmaster drawing pad** (worth £130). There are also five runners-up prizes of the new **Letrajet Graphic Tool**, each worth £25.

Well, what are you waiting for? Oh yes, the details!

COMPETITION

For the overall winner's prize, entrants must display the most innovative and imaginative use of the new graphic drawing utility from CREATIVE SPARKS – *Leonardo*. What you submit is entirely up to you, just so long as you don't forget to make use of ***Leonardo*** of course.

In Category One the prize will go to the person who in our view submits the Best Technical Drawing – exactly what you do a technical drawing of is, once again, up to you.

The Category Two prize will go to the artist of The Best Poster Drawing, and once more, subject and treatment is up to you.

You can enter any on or all three categories: that's **Leonardo** or **Best Technical Drawing** or **Best Poster Drawing**. Don't forget to write the appropriate category title on your submission(s), as well as your name and address, and send them to

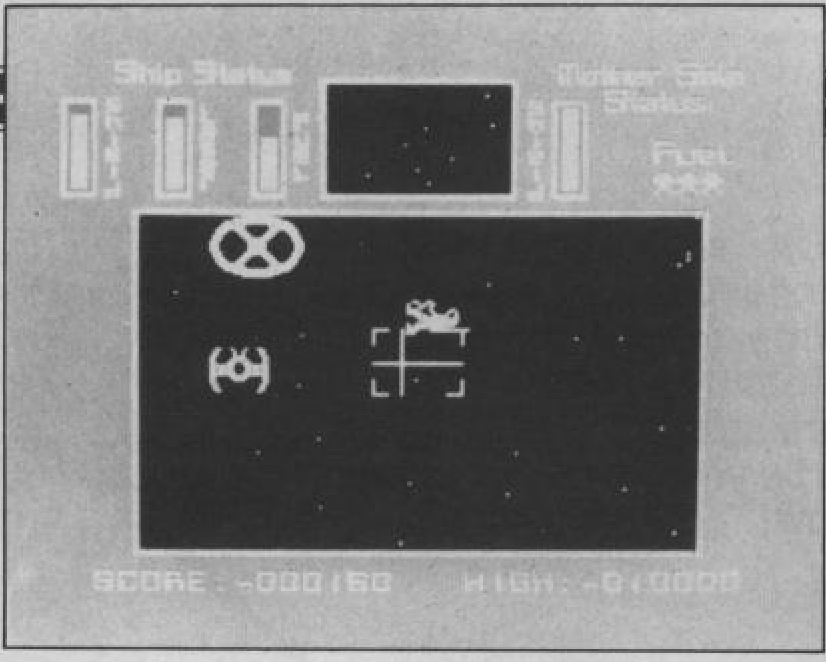
LEONARDO COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

Please make sure your entries are suitably wrapped or packaged to avoid damage, and if you would like them returned, please state so and enclose a suitably stamped and addressed return envelope.

DEADLINE

As this competition is a rather more demanding one than most we run (!), it has an appropriately longer time to run. Please ensure that entries arrive no later than first post **March 31 1985**

We hope winning entries will be published in CRASH (lavishly!) although at the time of going to print, this has not yet been confirmed. Watch out for further details next year. . .



NEW CYLON ATTACK

Producer: **A & F Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.75**
Language: **machine code**

A & F are probably most famous in Spectrum games for their hi-scorer platform game *Chuckie Egg*, which still sits in the CRASH chart even now. It's been quite a while since that came out and the latest release, *New Cylon Attack* is a conversion from the BBC and Electron micros. The game was said to have set new standards for space games on the Beeb, and one critic went as far as to say that the only problem with it was that there was nothing to criticise (thereby reinforcing the fallacy that criticism implies bad comments).
New Cylon Attack is a 3D space battle in which you must defend civilisation from the attacking Cylon ships. The aliens have discovered the route of your mother ship and are out to destroy it. As an interceptor pilot you are launched from the mother ship to fight them with your laser guns.
The screen display is largely filled with the 3D view of space. Centred in the view is a squared gun sight with vertical and lateral moving bars for fine sighting. The sights move with ship movement. Laser bolts are seen as round blobs hurtling out from either side of the screen towards the large and solid aliens.
Other screen information shown indicates status of shields, lasers and fuel. The lasers use energy and take time to recharge, failing to fire until replenished. Fuel and shields are replenished by docking with the yellow coloured mothership — an automatic process if you line the sights on it. Although fuel may be replenished by docking during an attack wave, shields are only replenished when a wave is defeated. But during the docking aliens may attack the mother ship.
Apart from the multifarious alien craft there are other celestial bodies about, planets with moons, signposts pointing to Mars, comets and many stars. A radar above the viewscreen indicates the positions of attacking aliens which are just out of visual range, while the mother ship is a yellow flashing dot.
Well they thought it was great on the Beeb — how about the Spectrum?

CRITICISM

● 'A & F's *New Cylon Attack* is a 3D cockpit game using graphics which are more solid than the type used by some similar and recent games. The game is very playable but it only involves shooting Cylons — unlike other recent 3D space games like *Dark Star* and *Starstrike*, which have more things to do. But *Cylon Attack* is not exactly like them in the truest sense — it's basically a cockpit shoot em up, and it's a good one at that.'

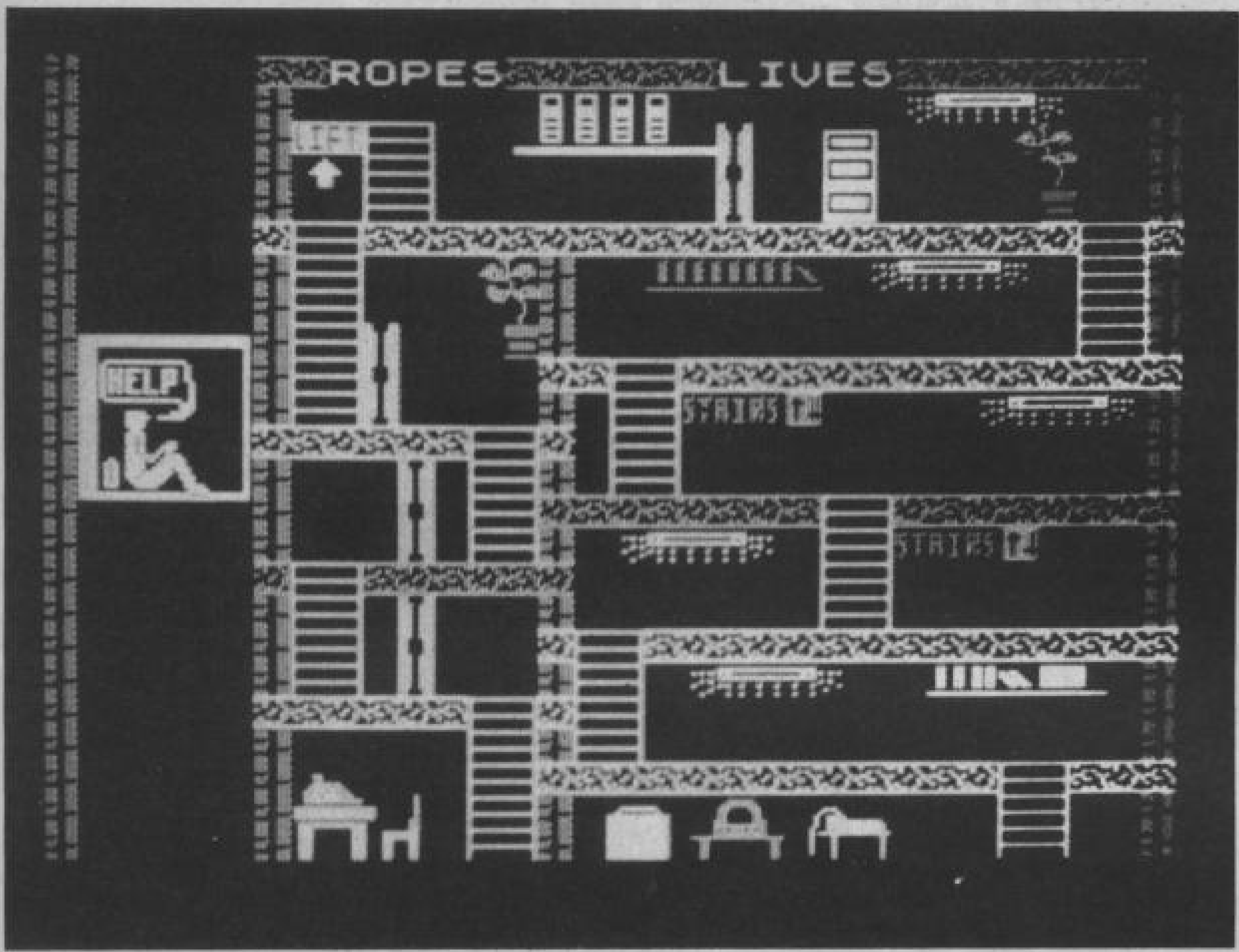
● *'It's nice to be able to get away from the 3D wireframe that so many recent games have been specialising on and have solids for a change. I must say, I still prefer solid graphics, and these are nice big and detailed graphics that work well in perspective. This is not just a space shoot em game with your task to eliminate every alien in sight – this game contains more things such as rotating planets with rotating moons circling them, meteorites and asteroids as well as other various classes of space ships which cannot be shot – one of the most recognisable being the USS Enterprise! I am pleased to see A & F keeping on the Spectrum scene as they don't seem to have produced anything for the last six months. Good sound on this game is also a welcome feature. I found the game very playable, but maybe a little wearing on the addictive qualities.'*

● 'There's something a bit old fashioned about *New Cylon Attack*, not surprising perhaps, as this is an older game from another machine converted to the Spectrum. Not that the old fashioned quality is a drawback, because the graphics and speed are very much up to date, and what you get is a good, zappy shoot em up in the *Timegate* tradition. Good sound effects add to the atmosphere as well as dashes of visual humour in some of the debris occupying space with you. I did find that the game had a limited appeal after a while, which affects its addictivity a little, but definitely one for the shoot em up brigade.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable, needs four directional and one for fire
Joystick: Kempston catered for, others via UDK
Keyboard play: responsive — watch out for 'inertia' effect
Use of colour: playing area is black and white, simple usage around
Graphics: good, fast moving, large and work well in perspective
Sound: very good
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3 fuel lives and percentage of shield damage
Screens: many attack waves
Special features:
General rating: good.

Use of computer	80%
Graphics	79%
Playability	77%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	78%
Overall	**78%**



PLUMMET!

Producer: **Interceptor Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.00**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Stephen Curtis**

Maiden voyages of almost anything seem to attract drama. There was the sinking of the Titanic, Paul Newman's beautiful glass tower burned down in *Towering Inferno*, and now, during the opening of New York's newest skyscraper, the Mayor has got stuck between floors in the lift and the chain holding the lift is slowly breaking. The hero of the piece is not Robert Redford but Orson who has been summoned to rescue the Mayor before death sets in. Orson must get enough ropes from the building to tie the lift to the steel beams to prevent its plummet. The skyscraper is seen as three screens (this isn't exctly a TOWERING inferno) or floors, and you can move between them by using the many relevant staircases, whilst avoiding being crushed by concrete blocks, grabbed by a zombie doorman or mutant revolving door or falling dust (they did say this was a NEW skyscraper?) and collecting the ropes necessary for the task. Fire doors on the second screen are shut and can't be opened unless you fire at them.



CRITICISM

● *'Plummet!* is an above average game with good graphics. The game is playable but a task reduced only to getting ropes does not help the addictive qualities very much. Perhaps the imagination should have been used more in game creation than on variants of well tred themes. Fair enough, the game has not been brought out before but it seemed to have those properties of so many other games which make it feel familiar. For example, afer seeing a few episodes of American TV series (no names!), the plots wear a little thin, an although this is an above average game, it is made up from the same old material. A little more imagination and originality please!'

● 'Plummet! *is on the whole one of the most infuriating games Ihave played. Once you get to the top screen, shoot the doormen and dodge the falling dust and put a rop in the lift, your fire button stops working. I thought the graphics were very good but the sound, wht there was of it, wasn't. Igenerally enjoyed playing it, even though it is infuriating.'*

● *'Interceptor are probably better known for their CBM64 games where the graphics are great bu the game content is often lcking. This seems to be the case with Plummet!*. Graphically, the three screens are very good, the player and the Zombie Doormen are well animated an even the sound is good; bu the game's challenge will be gone within a week even for people who find 'Breakout' games mystifying. Especially when priced this high, good graphics are not enough. We Spectrum owners are not averse to games being complex and mean, so a three-screen cousin of *Manic Miner* is hardly likely to set the Hotline Chart ablaze.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, SPACE to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Protek, AGF, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: sensible positions and responsive
Use of colour: good
Graphics: smooth, with some nice animation, generally simple looking
Sound: poor
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 3
Special features:
General rating: lacks addictivity and scope, only average at a steep price.

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	68%
Playability	70%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	49%
Value for money	45%
Overall	61%




ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME
PRESENTS
JETMAN
GOOD GRIEF! HERE I AM, HEADING FOR A TERRIBLE DISASTER, BUT BEFORE THE COMPUTER COULD TELL ME WHAT IT WAS, THE MONSTER ATE IT....
HONGRY!
NEEDS SALT!
GROMF
BUT I FEAR NOT, FOR THIS MONSTER LIKES ME, AND WITH THIS MONSTER AT MY SIDE I WILL GO ANYWHERE IN MY SEARCH FOR THE EYE OF OKTUP!
HMM! I THINK I'LL EAT MY HUMAN NOW!
..EXCEPT A BLACK HOLE, OF COURSE!
HEH!
THWIP
WHAT WAS THAT JUST WENT "THWIP"?
WAS THAT YOU JUST WENT "THWIP"?
WELL SOMETHING AROUND HERE JUST WENT "THWIP"!
VERDAMT
SHNAP
GOOD GRIEF! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! WE HAVE PASSED THROUGH A BLACK HOLE, AND WE COULD BE LOST FOREVER!!
BWA!
EH?
ONE MOMENT WE WERE SAFE IN OUR OWN SPACE AND TIME.....
...THEN...THWIP!
THWIP?
FREVER?
WAH-HAAAAAAAAAA
ME HOMESICK!
LITTLE DOES OUR HERO KNOW...
...THE MONSTER IS NOW SITTING ON THE TRANSMIT BUTTON!
THE MONSTERS CRY ECHOES THROUGH DEEP SPACE...
AAAAA
...UNTIL...
YERTH?
GASP!
CHOKE!
THE DOOR!
THE DOOR!
SHUT THE DOOR!
CHOKE!
GAG
CUK
CUK
WATH YOU THOUTING FOR MUAH?
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, LITTLE ALIEN PEON! I YAM A BIG-TIME AMBASSADOR FROM EARTH, SENT TO FIND THE EYE OF OKTUP!
CHOOOOKE!
GAG
WELL, AIN'T THAT THOMETHIN'?
MAYBE WE CAN HELP EACH-OTHER OUT?
YOU THEE....


...WE WATH JUTHT LOOKIN' FOR EARTH!
HEAVENS TO BETSY! AN ALIEN INVASION FLEET!
THE DOOR!
THE DOOR...
SHUT THE...
GULP
DOOR...
HAH! YOU BLEW IT! NOW I WILL NEVER TELL YOU WHERE THE EARTH IS! NEVER! YOU HEAR ME? NOT I! NO WAY! SHAN'T!
TH' DOOR...
SECOND BLACK HOLE ON THE LEFT!
DOOR...
HAH! THEY'VE GONE! LITTLE KNOWING THAT I CUNNINGLY SENT THEM THROUGH THE WRONG BLACK HOLE!
SHUT THE DOOR
WHEEEEZE
AN' NOW, JUST A FEW DEFT TURNS WITH THE HAMMER AND I SHALL REPAIR MY TRUSTY COMPUTER, AN' ASK IT WHERE THE EYE OF OKTUP AM!
OKAY, EARTHMAN! NOW YOU GOIN' DIE!
I FIXED IT! I FIXED IT!
WHERE OL' OKTUP AT, BWAH?
OH! IT'S HIM!
STREWTH! MY CHIPS ACHE!
GOOD GRIEF! THE EYE OF OKTUP IS THROUGH THE SECOND BLACK HOLE ON THE LEFT, WHERE I SENT THE ALIEN INVASION FLEET!
WHERE ELSE?
EYE OF OKTUP IS THROUGH SECOND BLACK HOLE ON THE LEFT!
HAH! I SHALL NOT CEASE MY SEARCH BECAUSE OF A MILLION ALIENS! WE SHALL ENTER THE SECOND BLACK HOLE ON THE LEFT AND FIND THE EYE OF OKTUP!
THWIP!
HEH!
GULP!
THWIP
OKAY, OKAY! SO I TOL' A LI'L FIB! BUT IF YOU GIVE ME THE FABULOUS EYE OF OKTUP, THEN I WILL TELL YOU WHERE THE EARTH IS!
HOWZAT?
OXYGEN
VERY WELL, THMARTY PAUTH! HERE ITH OKTUP AND HITH FAMOUTH EYE! NOW ARE YOU GONNA TELL UTH WHERE THE EARTH ITH, OR THALL I GIVE YOU A FAT LIP?
OH, JOY! AT LAST THE EYE IS MINE! MY MISSION IS ACCOMPLISHED...
WHA'S GOIN' ON!
WHO BIT LOONY?
...EARTH IS THROUGH THE THIRD BLACK HOLE ON THE LEFT!
THWIP
THWIP
THWIP
WIP
THEY'VE GONE! HAH! LITTLE DO THEY KNOW THAT I LIED AGAIN!
AND WHILE THE ALIENS DASH AROUND THE UNIVERSE LOOKIN' FOR EARTH, I SHALL RETURN THERE, A HERO!
ER...
OWYA!
OWYA!
...WHEN I FIND OUT WHERE EARTH REALLY IS!
ME EYE-ME EYE!
GULP!
THWIP??
PIG!
THE EARTH IS SECOND ON THE LEFT THROUGH THE THIRD BLACK HOLE! ....IDIOT!
GOSH! OUR HERO REALLY HAS DIRECTED AN ALIEN INVASION FLEET TOWARD EARTH! HOW'S HE GONNA GET OUT OF THIS, EH? HOW...? EH? WOT?... EH? EH?
NEX' MUNF.

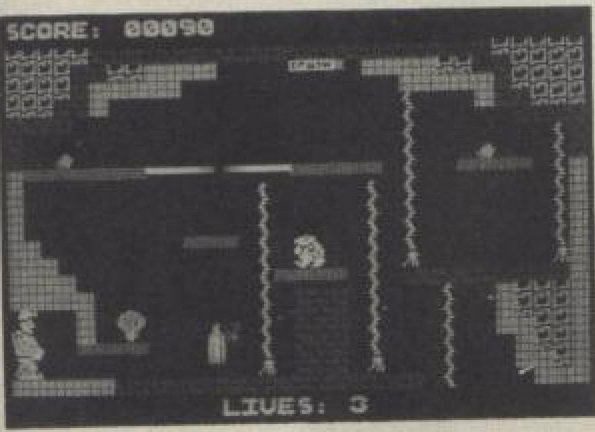


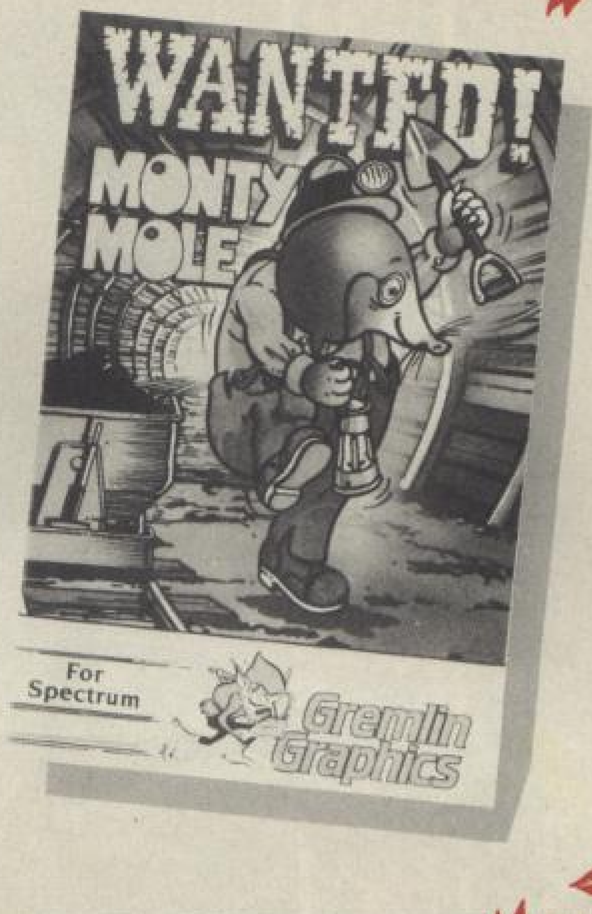
CRASH Readers Awards 1984

IT SEEMS SUITABLE to announce the results of the CRASH READERS' AWARDS 1984 in this issue of CRASH because it marks the end of our first year of existence. Unlike most other computer magazines CRASH started life as a mail order catalogue which reviewed games as a part of its service, leaving customers to make up their own minds about actually buying. Because of this earlier background, some of that philosophy carried over into the magazine. The idea was to act as a service not only to readers, but also to the software industry – a means of bringing both sides together. All too often, people 'suppose' what others want and magazines go along with it regardless. Only time will tell whether or not CRASH has had any significant effect on either software producers or software buyers, but it seems logical to let readers say their piece on what software and hardware they have liked best during the past year. These are the results of the 1984 CRASH READERS' AWARDS. . .

BEST PLATFORM GAME

MONTY MOLE
by GREMLIN GRAPHICS





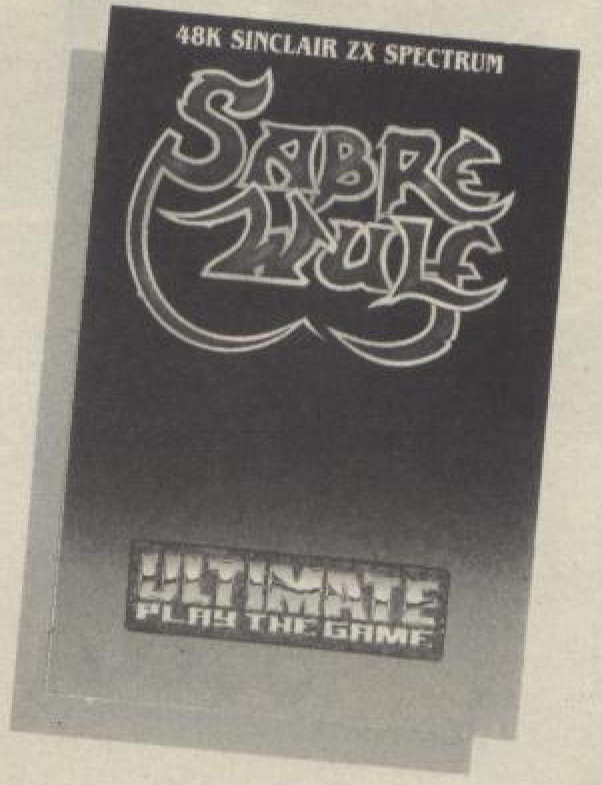
One argument about the 'Oscars' is that it is the films towards the end of the 'Oscar' year that tend to win the awards, with the earlier ones tending to be forgotten. That's as may be, but Gremlin's *Monty Mole* won by a comfortable margin over *Jet Set Willy*, taking 40% of the total vote. Third in line was *Frank N. Stein* from P. S. S.

Written by Peter Harrap, *Monty Mole* sprang to fame via the TV news, with its timely caricature of Miners' leader Arthur Scargill, but it was the complexity of playing the platform style game that gave it appeal, along with its lively graphics. One reviewer said, 'The graphics, design and animation off all the moving characters is excellent, amusing and attractive, and that adds quite a bit to the playability of the game.'

BEST MAZE GAME

SABRE WULF
by ULTIMATE





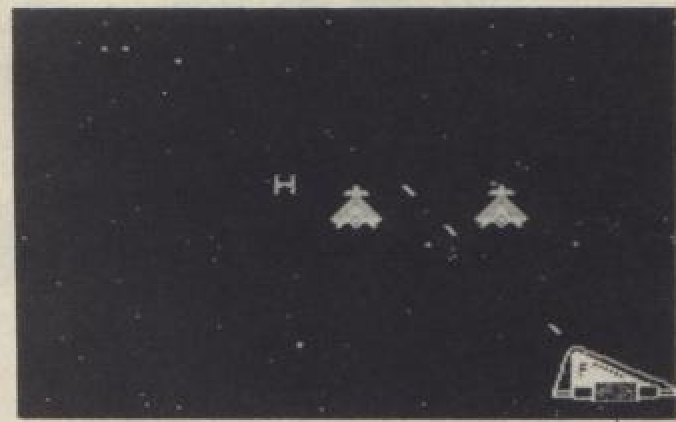
There could be hardly any doubt as to the outcome in this category and Ultimate's *Sabre Wulf* won hands down, getting 49% of the vote, with the next being *Cavelon* from Ocean with 11% and then *Antics* from Bug-Byte.

Despite arguments about Ultimate's steep price increase and whether *Sabre Wulf* was merely an *Atic Atac* with leaves on, the game has caused more praising mail than any other game we can think of this year. The graphics were excellent, and the game a tough one to play, though perhaps not quite as hard as *Atic Atac*. The sort of excitement that a new Ultimate game can produce is summed up neatly by one reviewer who said, 'After waiting a week in a state of extreme anxiety for the phone call to say IT'S HERE! I almost fainted when it came!' The same reviewer has recently been in a state suitable for hospitalisation with the wait for *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore*!

BEST SHOOT EM UP

AD ASTRA
by GARGOYLE GAMES





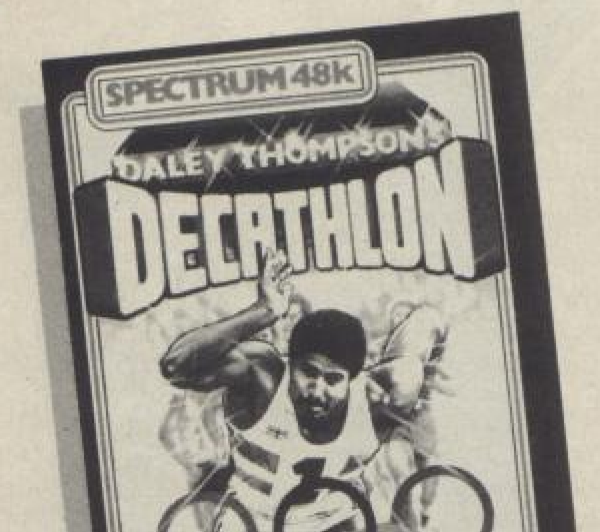
The extraordinary solid 3D graphics of *Ad Astra* launched Gargoyle Games, and CRASH was proud to be the first to spot it in the May issue, when we said things like, 'The stunning graphics are the first thing to hit you in the eye. . .'

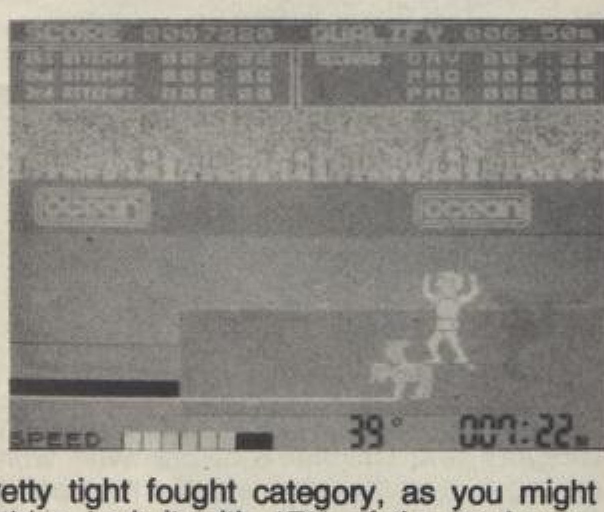
'With its superb graphics, speed and mass of alien weaponry, *Ad Astra* is a difficult and addictive game to play.'

It was a comfortable win over Micromega's *Code Name Mat*and *Black Hawk* from Creative Sparks. We have to admit to some puzzlement that Micromega's *Death Chase* didn't crop up near the top of this category, but Gargoyle's win is well deserved, and the Birmingham-based software house is set to give us more surprises in 1985 with their unique graphics.

BEST (OVERALL) ARCADE GAME

DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON
by OCEAN





This was a pretty tight fought category, as you might imagine. *Decathlon* took it with 17% of the total vote, closely followed by *Jet Set Willy* with 15% of the total vote and *Sabre Wulf* with 12%.

Being the year of the Olympics, 1984 saw a spate of 'Track and Field' type games appearing in the early summer – some are still appearing even now, but clearly Ocean's glamorous tie up with British star decathlete Daley Thompson, was set for the top. At CRASH we had a good chance to play the game as it was used to test the joysticks for the 'Battlefield' article. The reviewers liked it, even after seeing the CBM64 version, with the only gripe being that Daley looked as though he had been washed in Bold!

BEST TEXT/GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT
by BEYOND SOFTWARE

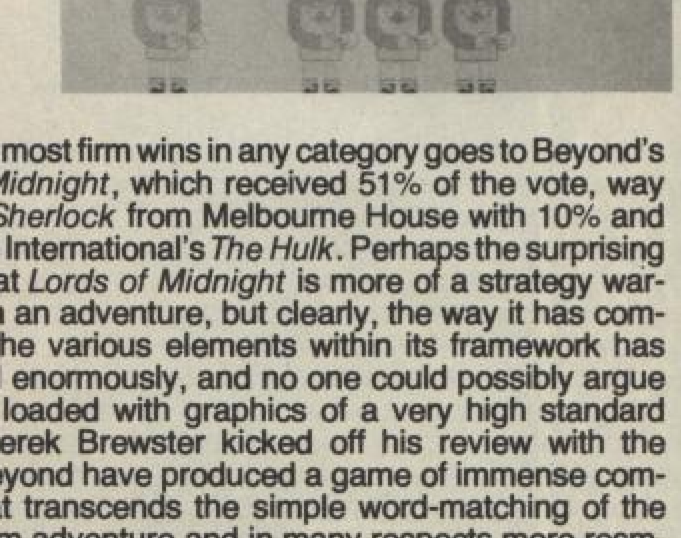




One of the most firm wins in any category goes to Beyond's *Lords of Midnight*, which received 51% of the vote, way ahead of *Sherlock* from Melbourne House with 10% and Adventure International's *The Hulk*. Perhaps the surprising point is that *Lords of Midnight* is more of a strategy wargame than an adventure, but clearly, the way it has combined all the various elements within its framework has impressed enormously, and no one could possibly argue that it isn't loaded with graphics of a very high standard indeed. Derek Brewster kicked off his review with the words, 'Beyond have produced a game of immense complexity that transcends the simple word-matching of the mainstream adventure and in many respects more resmbles a strategy wargame'.

BEST SIMULATION

FIGHTER PILOT
by DIGITAL INTEGRATION





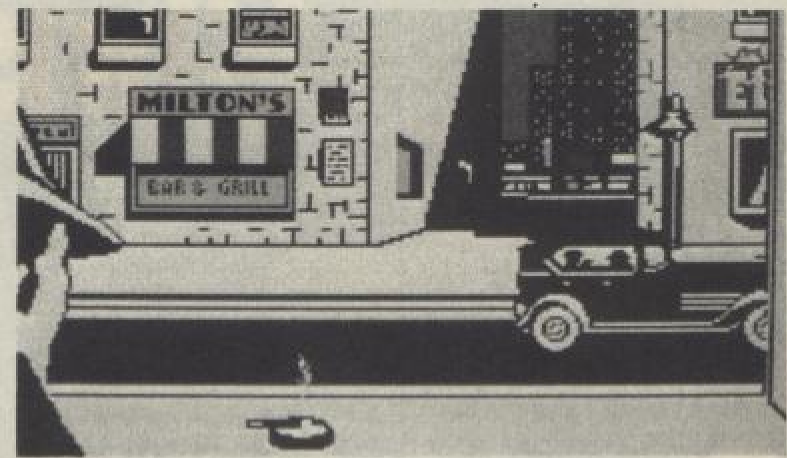
Few would deny Digital Integration's right to take this category with their superb program *Fighter Pilot*, which has remained consistently in the CRASH Hotline chart for some time – a proof of its high popularity. It wins comfortably with a high 35% of the vote from Psion's *Match Point* which received 18% and Micromega's *Full Throttle* with 14%. Written by Digital's co-owner Dave Marshall, himself a fighter pilot, this sophisticated program was the main attention grabber at the ZX Microfair where it was first launched in February. Much was due to the fact that before *Fighter Pilot* flight simulations always seemed a bit slow, this was the first to offer arcade gamers something to get their teeth into.


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BEST STRATEGY/SIMULATION

MUGSY
by MELBOURNE HOUSE



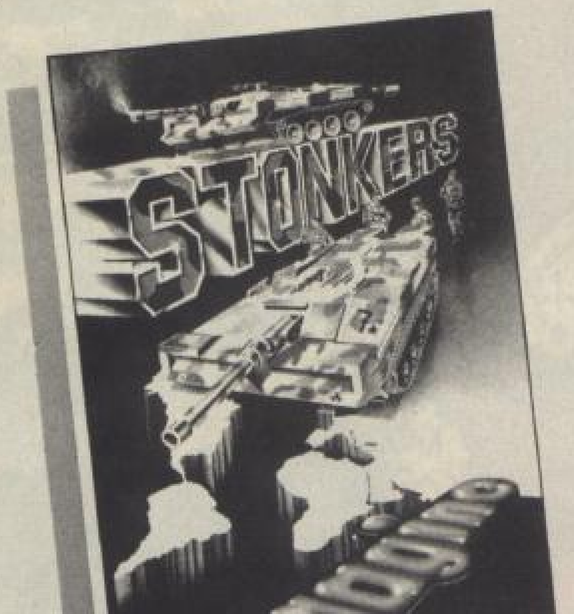


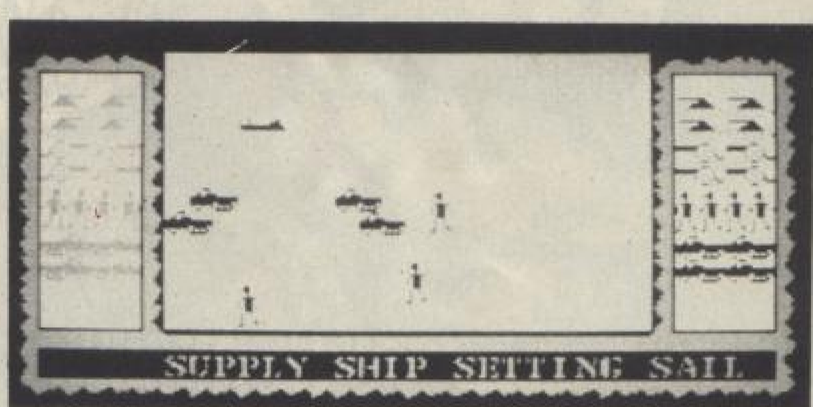
A rather peculiar category this one – hard to describe accurately, but everyone seems to have got the idea. Outright winner with 18% of the total vote is Melbourne House with their superbly graphic *Mugsy*, another popular CRASH charter. Not too far behind was Incentive with their look at the software business called *Millionaire*, and just behind that comes the ubiquitous Beyond with *Lords of Midnight*again. It would be fair to add that *Football Manager*received a very high vote, but as the program dates from 83 it isn't elligible.

Mugsy scores so heavily with its tremendous comic style graphics, suited to a game set in the roaring tewnties when hoods were really hoods, and people were assets to be squeezed.

BEST WARGAME

STONKERS
by IMAGINE





There was a fair selection of wargames voted for which means that the percentages gained by the top three are fairly low. Imagine's colourful *Stonkers* came out ahead with 25% of the overall vote, very closely followed by *Lords of Midnight*. Further back was Red Shift's elegant *Rebel Star Raiders*. CRASH was only medium impressed by *Stonkers*, but admitted that the game was different to any wargame before it, one reviewer saying, 'The game appealed to me much more than most of the other wargames due to its higher quality of graphics, large scale and simple controls. ' The bug which causes the program to crash was noted, but to our knowledge Imagine never corrected it before they crashed themselves.

Gremlin Graphics
buy these games at your peril!

Two new games to drive you as potty as Percy, as mad as Monty packing in as much excitement and nerve racking tension as anything you can buy. The first launch from a new company whose design team have already shown themselves to be masters of games planning, graphic and sound effects.

Tony Crowther

One of today's brightest and most successful games developers, author of such outstanding hits as Loco, Blagger and Son of Blagger. A "Crowther Classic" is not just a game but an enthralling opportunity to challenge one of the liveliest minds in modern games computing circles.

Peter Harrap

A sparkling new approach from a fresh face t Spectrum programming. His Monty Mole has create outstanding interest and received fine reviews fron games "buffs", national press, radio and televisio



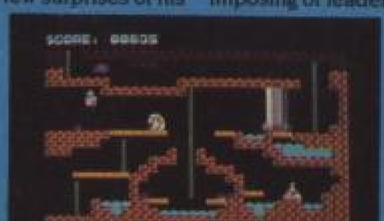
Percy the Potty Pigeon – Make a suicide journey with our fluffy little friend Percy in his desperate attempts to build himself a cosy little home. Plunging to near certain destruction this crazy little bird has to pluck ten nest building twigs from the path of onrushing traffic, frantically avoiding the unwelcome attentions of a pigeon eating cat and starving ferret. Once off the tarmac the danger doesn't end as Percy carefully avoids the kamikaze planes, balloons and twig snatching sparrows before he can complete his nest and move to next level. But don't be totally disheartened our loveable little character has a few surprises of his own in the shape of revolting explosive eggs.

Wanted Monty Mole – Facing a long cold winter Monty Mole makes a daring, coal snatching raid to his local South Yorkshire pit. Grabbing a miner's bucket he heads into the darkness c his illicit escapade, soon to realise that the flu may have been a better choice. Alas there's n turning back. Onward to do battle with flying pickets, mammal eating fish, trundling coal crushers, roaming coal drills, filling his bucket dodging the disappearing floor. With his bucket filled, Monty makes his escape only to surface in Arthur's castle with this mo imposing of leaders barring his way seated on his graphite throne. Cleverly seizing his only chance of toppling the gre man, Monty collects the secret ballot papers and vote casting scroll. But Arthur's no fool when it comes to the heavy stuff and his personal bodygua of super fit pickets and deadly flying hairsprays p up an almighty struggle wi our valiant Mole.

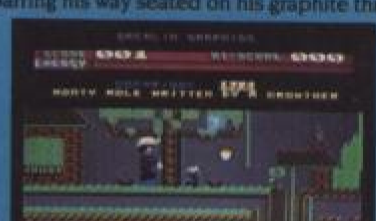
COMING SOON! Potty Pigeon on Spectrum 48K



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Monty Mole Spectrum 48K £6.95



Monty Mole Commodore 64 £7.95

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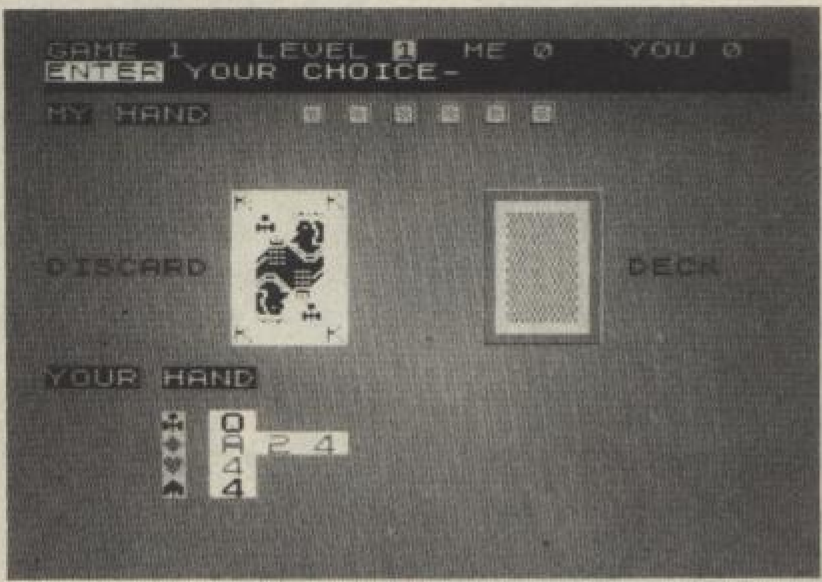
Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Telephone: (0742) 753423

Gremlin Graphics

BEST BOARD/CARD/PUZZLE GAME

EIGHTS
by ATLANTIS SOFTWARE





The budget priced game from Atlantis was a clear winner in this category, although there were masses of votes for games like *Scrabble* and *Cyrus IS Chess*, both of which pre-date 84. *Eights* is an elegantly written program based on a clever and playable card game, and certainly at its price is excellent value. Not far behind came Artic's *Death Chess 5000* and DK'Tronics' *Jumbly*.

STATE OF THE ART AWARD

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT
by BEYOND SOFTWARE





Beyond's supremacy in this category is undoubted with 34% of the total vote. Second is Ultimate with *Sabre Wulf* with 12% and *Jet Set Willy* coming in third from Software Projects. *Lords of Midnight* author, Mike Singleton, deserves the award for the development of this popular game, which seems to occupy the time and imagination of so many people. Derek Brewster said, 'Many features of the game are new or are developed to an elaborate degree setting new high standards in Spectrum software.'



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BEST TEXT-ONLY ADVENTURE

SNOWBALL
by LEVEL 9 COMPUTING



Text-only adventures still represent a large chunk of the market, with Level 9 one of the most respected (although they too have turned to graphics with their latest release). *Snowball* won this category hands down, with *Dennis through the Drinking Glass* by Applications coming in second and Incentive's *Mountains of Ket* following close behind. There were many votes in this category for games which were not copyrighted in 1984, and were thus ineligible

In adventures it is usual to boast of the number of loctions, but *Snowball* probably takes the biscuit with over 7, 000. Of the game, Derek Brewster said, 'This is very much my idea of an adventure and is set to become a classsic.'

BEST UTILITY PROGRAM

THE QUILL
by GILSOFT

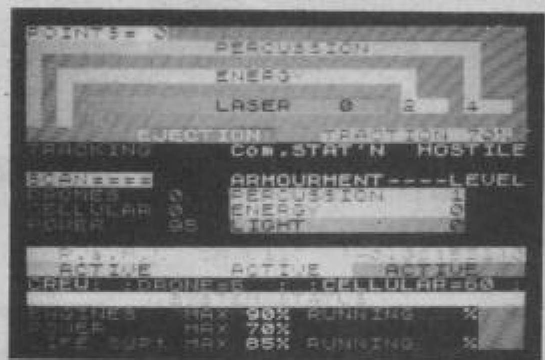


This was a very hard fought category with Gilsoft just pipping Oasis to the finishing line by one vote! So the machine code adventure writing utility *The Quill*, another long stayer in the CRASH Hotline chart, takes the award from the graphics designer *White Lightning*. Third was *Melbourne Draw* from Melbourne House. Certainly Gilsoft have made an appreciable dent in adeventuring consciousness with *The Quill*, not only by offering BASIC programmers the opportunity to write complex machine code adventures, but also in spawning a plethora of commercially marketed adventure games from numerous software houses, many of which have been excellent. To complement *The Quill*, there is now *The Illustrator*, a graphics designer specially created to work in conjunction with *The Quill*.

BUMMER OF THE YEAR

KOSMIK PIRATE
by ELEPHANT SOFTWARE

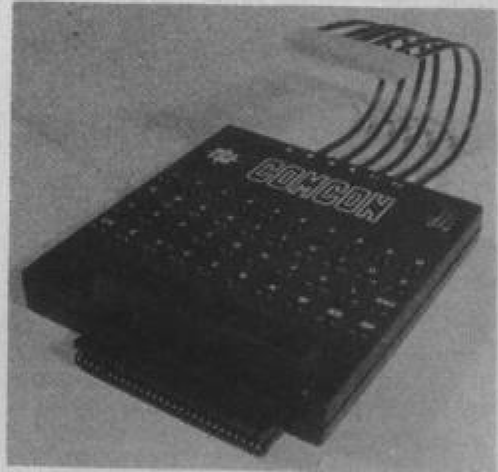




The top contenders in this category were numerous! That the winner received only 17% of the total vote goes to show that most of you have your favourite bummers, and they are often quite varied. Following very closely on the heels of *Kosmik Pirate* comes the megadventure *Voyage Into the Unknown* from Mastertronic, and trailing in as a sad third *Formula One* from Spirit Software.

BEST HARDWARE ADD-ON

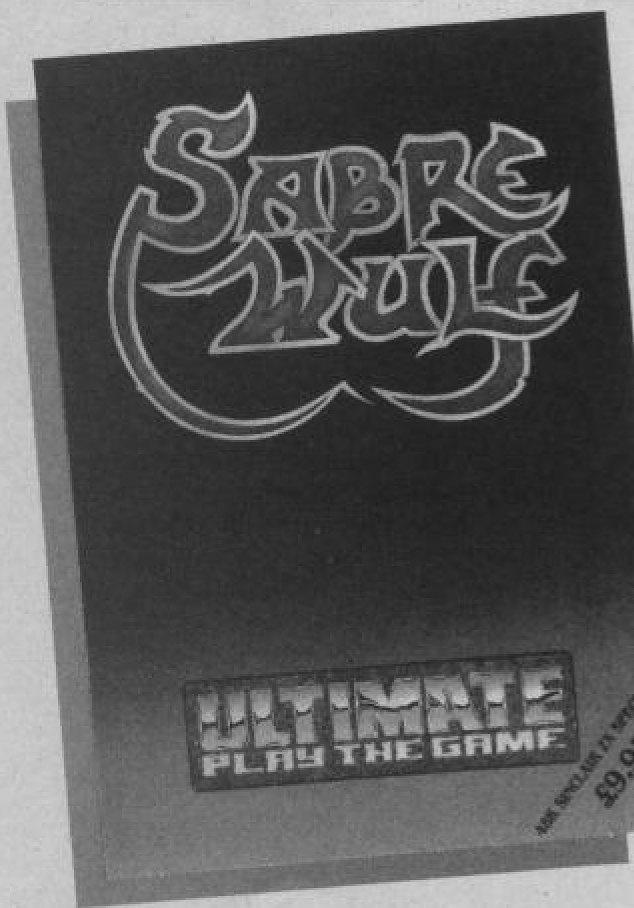
COMCON JOYSTICK INTERFACE
by FREL LIMITED



It would only be fair to point out that the winner by votes was the Currah Microspeech unit, but this is not elligible as the unit was released in 83 and not 84. But Frel were not so far behind in votes, as this essentially simple plug-in joystick interface has proved enormously popular and within a fairly short space of time too. The second most voted for add-on was the Ram Electronics Ram Turbo interface.

Perhaps the significant factor in the popularity of the Comcon interface is its simplicity and flexibilty, working as it does with virtually any game, and programmable in seconds as the game loads. Also, because of its simple construction, the price is among the lowest on the market – an added advantage.

BEST LOOKING ADVERT TO APPEAR IN A MAGAZINE



SABRE WULF
from ULTIMATE

This category certainly aroused a lot of interest, and a wide spread of choices too, reflected in the low percentage scored by the winner, Ultimate's *Sabre Wulf* ad with 11% of the total vote. A fairly close second was the Software Projects' ad for *Jet Set Willy*, followed by the strikingly simple ad from Mikro-Gen for *Pyjamarama*. While no one could really argue that all three adverts are not well designed and attractive, we wonder how much opinions have been swayed by the games themselves!?

May we take this opportunity to thank everyone of our readers who contributed to these awards by voting and writing in. Certificates for each award are being given to the companies involved. They are valuable because they result from the best panel of experts available – you, the readers, purchasers and players of the games.

As promised, the first 15 voting forms pulled from the bag after collation of the results, will each receive £10 worth of software of their choice plus a CRASH t-shirt. They are:

Stephen Ligthfoot, Sutton Coldfield W. Midlands
H. Leech, Watford, Herts
Mrs. C. Moore, Intake, Sheffield
Julian Paine, Reading, Berks
David Ross, Glasgow, Scotland
Barry McLeod, Bodmin, Cornwall
Paul Edwin Hutchinson, Upper Norwood, London
Stephen Nye, Frome, Somerset
Philip Day, Grimsby, South Humberside
Wayne Thircwell, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear
Paul Hobbs, Southampton, Hants
Terry Willis Jnr, Bolney, West Sussex
Paul Collins, Chigwell, Essex
D. Griffin, Millom, Cumbria
Richard Holland, Sheffield, S. Yorks

The CRASH HOTLINE

THE CRASH HOTLINE PHONE NUMBER IS 0584 (Ludlow) 3015

HOW TO USE THE CRASH HOTLINE

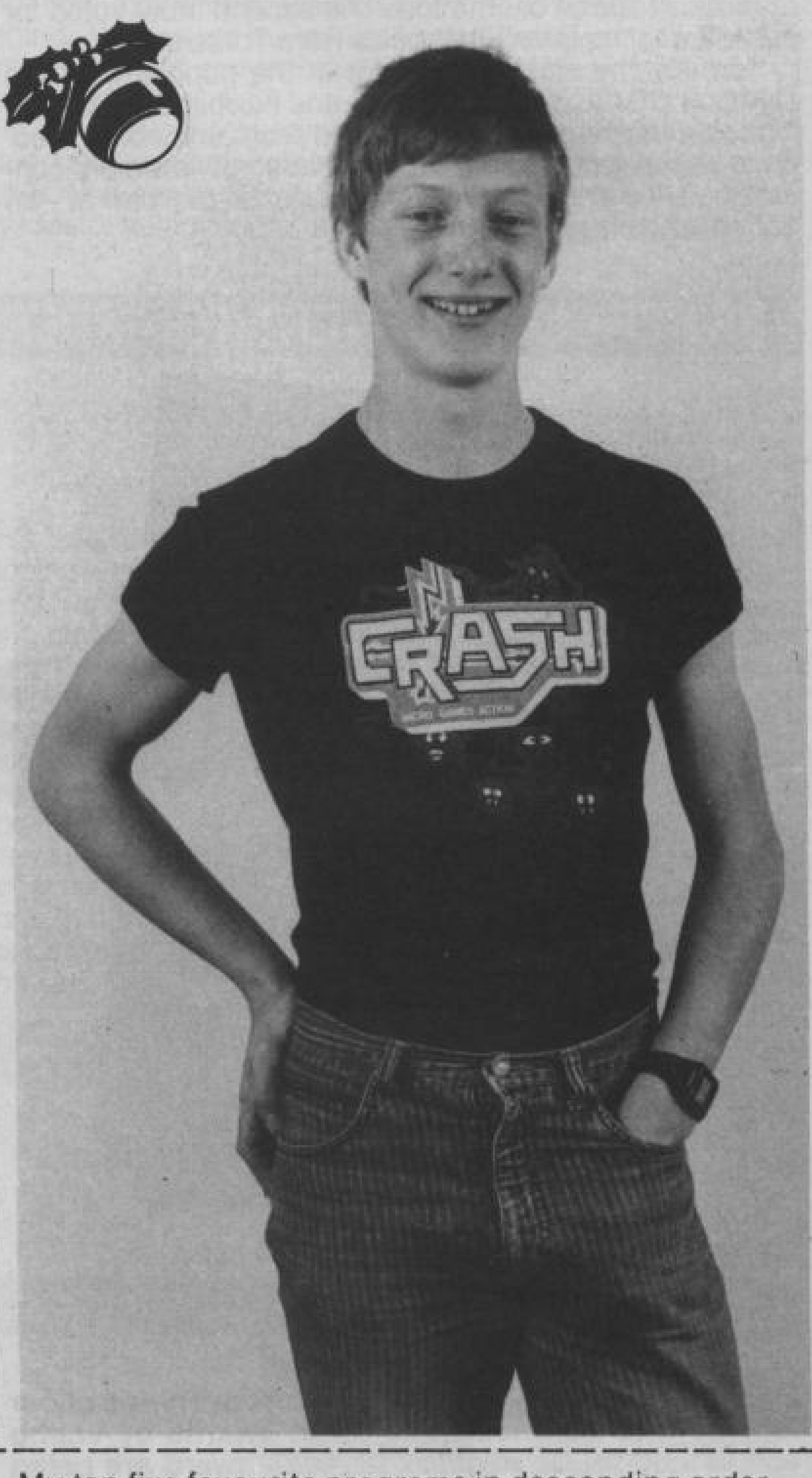
Method 1
Ring the Hotline telephone number (above) and record your votes on the answering machine. Please speak clearly, spelling out name and address if it's a 'difficult' one! List your five games starting with the number one.

Method 2
Use the coupon below, making sure you fill in all the details. Pop the coupon in an envelope and send it to us. Alternatively you may send a letter if you don't want to cut up the mag.

The telephone Hotline is getting very jammed after a new issue comes out, so bear with us if it's engaged. If all else fails – write in!

Well, the Christmas chart sees quite a few changes from last month. Not much at the very top where *Sabre Wulf* and *Lords of Midnight* are well fixed, but *Daley'd decathlon* moves up 4 to the number 3 slot, and *Sabre Wulf* finds its pre-eminent position threatened by none other than the biggest climber of the month, stablemate and follow up *Underwurlde*, straight into the chart at number 6. *Monty Mole* also climbs to the number 4 slot, with Wally Week's nightware not far behinf, a big climb from 25 to 10 for *Pyjamarama*. One of the biggest leapersw this month is **Hewson**'s *Legend of Avalon*, up 32 places to number 12. With nearly two weeks less voting, Ultimate's third in the trilogy, *Knight Lore*, has appeared from nowhere at the 23 position, and that makes Ultimate look set to take an incredible record for the top three places in the chart. Quite a few new arrivals this month; *Deus Ex Machina* from **Automata**, a rare high entry for an adventure from Derek Brester's *Kentilla* at 32, the **Gargoyle** *Tir Na Nog* at 40, and an ironic coupling of **Quicksilva**'s *Ant Attack* at 43 and *Zombie Zombie* at 44. Derke's other game *Jasper* give **Micromage** yet another chart entry. *Kokotoni Wilf* makes a climb of 9 places, and **Melbourne**'s *Sherlock* also climbs well, 13 places up to 27.

Lords of Midnight still lies second to *Sherlock*, but Minight help is on the way, with the release of follow up *Doomdark's Revenge*. A startling rush for the top comes from new company *Mizar* with their marvellous *Out of the Shadows*, straight in for the first time at number 3. The Adventure chart certainly moves around a bit, and *Snowball* which went from 3 to last month's 9, is back up to this month's 4 position. **Level 9** are well in, however, as brand new *Return to Eden* clocks in not far behind at 7. Other newcomers are *Tower of Despair* from *Games Workshop* at 11, third in the Ket Trilogy, *The Final Mission* from **Incentive**.



BRILL 'N' FAB HOTLINE PRIZES!!

Whether you phone or write in, all names go into the voluminous bag to be drawn monthly. First out receives **£40 worth of software** plus a CRASH tee shirt, and the five runners-up receive three issues of CRASH free plus a CRASH tee shirt.

Others may try and copy us but the CRASH HOTLINE CHART is the one that counts – and you are the people that make it count.

YOUR VOTE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT — USE IT PLEASE!

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My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

CRASH HOTLINE

This month's Hotline winner is **Darren Castle**, Beckenham, Kent, and the four runners up are; **Rhys Davies**, Wooston, Leicester; **Richard Hilton**, Corg Park, Amersham, Bucks; **Justin Driver**, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex; **A. Witchell, Alveston, Bristol**

TOP 50 FOR JANUARY

(Figures in parenthesis indicate last month's position)

1	(–1)	**SABRE WULF** Ultimate
2	(–2)	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
3	(–7)	**DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON** Ocean
4	(10)	**MONTY MOLE** Gremlin Graphics
5	(–3)	**MATCHPOINT** Psion/*Sinclair*
6	(—)	**UNDERWURLDE** Ultimate
7	(–4)	**JET SET WILLY** Software Projects
8	(–5)	**FULL THROTTLE** Micromega
9	(–6)	**ATIC ATAC** Ultimate
10	(25)	**PYJAMARAMA** Mikro-Gen
11	(–8)	**CODE NAME MAT** Micromega
12	(44)	**THE LEGEND OF AVALON** Hewson
13	(–9)	**LUNAR JETMAN** Ultimate
14	(14)	**AUTOMANIA** Mikro-Gen
15	(11)	**MANIC MINER** Software Projects
16	(12)	**MOON ALERT** Ocean
17	(13)	**TLL** Vortex
18	(27)	**KOKOTONI WILF** Elite
19	(15)	**WHEELIE** Microsphere
20	(16)	**CHUCKIE EGG A&F** Software
21	(17)	**KOSMIC KANGA** Micromania
22	(18)	**TRASHMAN** New Generation
23	(—)	**KNIGHT LORE** Ultimate
24	(19)	**ANTICS** Bug-Byte
25	(20)	**PSYTRON** Beyond
26	(21)	**WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA** Silversoft
27	(40)	**SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
28	(22)	**THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
29	(28)	**BEACH-HEAD** US Gold
30	(23)	**STOP THE EXPRESS** Sinclair
31	(—)	**DEUS EX MACHINA** Automata
32	(—)	**KENTILLA** Micromga
33	(24)	**AD ASTRA** argoyle Games
34	(26)	**DEATHCHASE** Micromega
35	(31)	**THE HULK** Adventure International
36	(32)	**FOOTBALL MANAGER** Addictive Games
37	(48)	**FRANK N. STEIN** P. S. S.
38	(29)	**SCUBA DIVE** Durell
39	(30)	**POGO** Ocean
40	(—)	**TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games
41	(33)	**FACTORY BREAKOUT** Poppy Soft
42	(34)	**THE QUILL** Gilsoft
43	(35)	**ANT ATTACK** Quicksilva
44	(—)	**ZOMBIE ZOMBIE** Quicksilva
45	(36)	**JETPAC** Ultimate
46	(37)	**ANDROID 2** Vortex
47	(38)	**CAVELON** Ocean
48	(39)	**FIGHTER PILOT** Digital Integration
49	(—)	**JASPER** Micromega
50	(41)	**PYRAMID** Fantasy

VOTE for the CHARTS



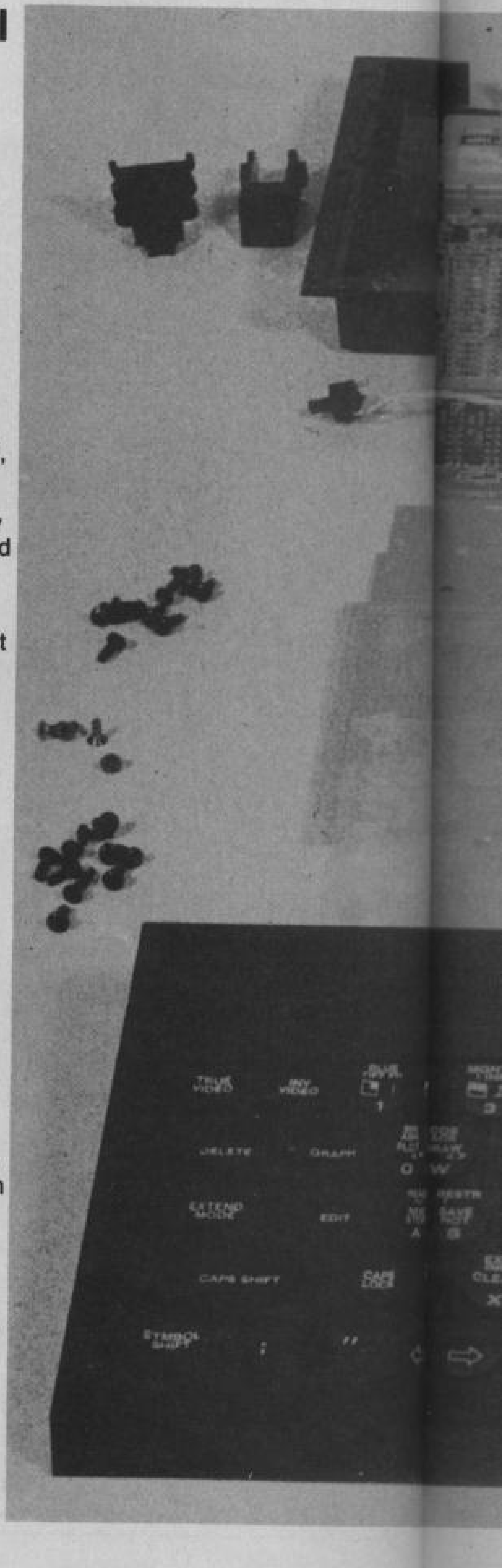
This month's **Adventure Trail winner is; Neil G. Milne**, Parkneuk, Dunfermline, Fife; **Mark Watts**, Norwich, Norfolk; **Wah Wai Wan**, Liverpool; **Stewart Shellard, Anchorage Park, Portsmouth, Hants; Richard Blachford**, Sundridge Park, Bromley, Kent.

CRASH ADVENTURE CHART

1	(–1)	**SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
2	(–2)	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
3	(—)	**OUT OF THE SHADOWS** Mizar
4	(–9)	**SNOWBALL** Level 9
5	(—)	**KENTILLA** Micromega
6	(–5)	**HOBBIT** Melbourne House
7	(—)	**RETURN TO EDEN** Level 9
8	(–7)	**WAYDOR** I. M. S.
9	(–5)	**HULK** Adventure International
10	(11)	**URBAN UPSTART** Shepherd
11	(—)	**TOWER OF DESPAIR** Games Workshop
12	(13)	**QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL** Dream Software
13	(—)	**THE FINAL MISSION** Incentive
14	(–6)	**CIRCUS** Channel 8
15	(16)	**COLOSSAL ADVENTURE** Level 9
16	(17)	**GOLDEN APPLE** Artic
17	(22)	**ESPIONAGE ISLAND** Artic
18	(11)	**ORACLE'S CAVE** Dorcas
19	(10)	**VELNOR'S LAIR** Quicksilva
20	(—)	**TEMPLE OF VRAN** Incentive
21	(29)	**TEN LITTLE INDIANS** Channel 8
22	(12)	**VALHALLA** Legend
23	(14)	**SHIP OF DOOM** Artic
24	(23)	**MAGIC MOUNTAIN** Phipps Associates
25	(–3)	**LORDS OF TIME** Level 9
26	(18)	**MOUNTAINS OF KET** Incentive
27	(30)	**MESSAGE FROM ANDROMEDA** Intercesptor
28	(—)	**TWIN KINGDON VALLEY** Bug-Byte
29	(—)	**HAMSTEAD** Melbourne House
30	(—)	**INCA CURSE** Artic

SPECTRUM+ = SPECTRUM

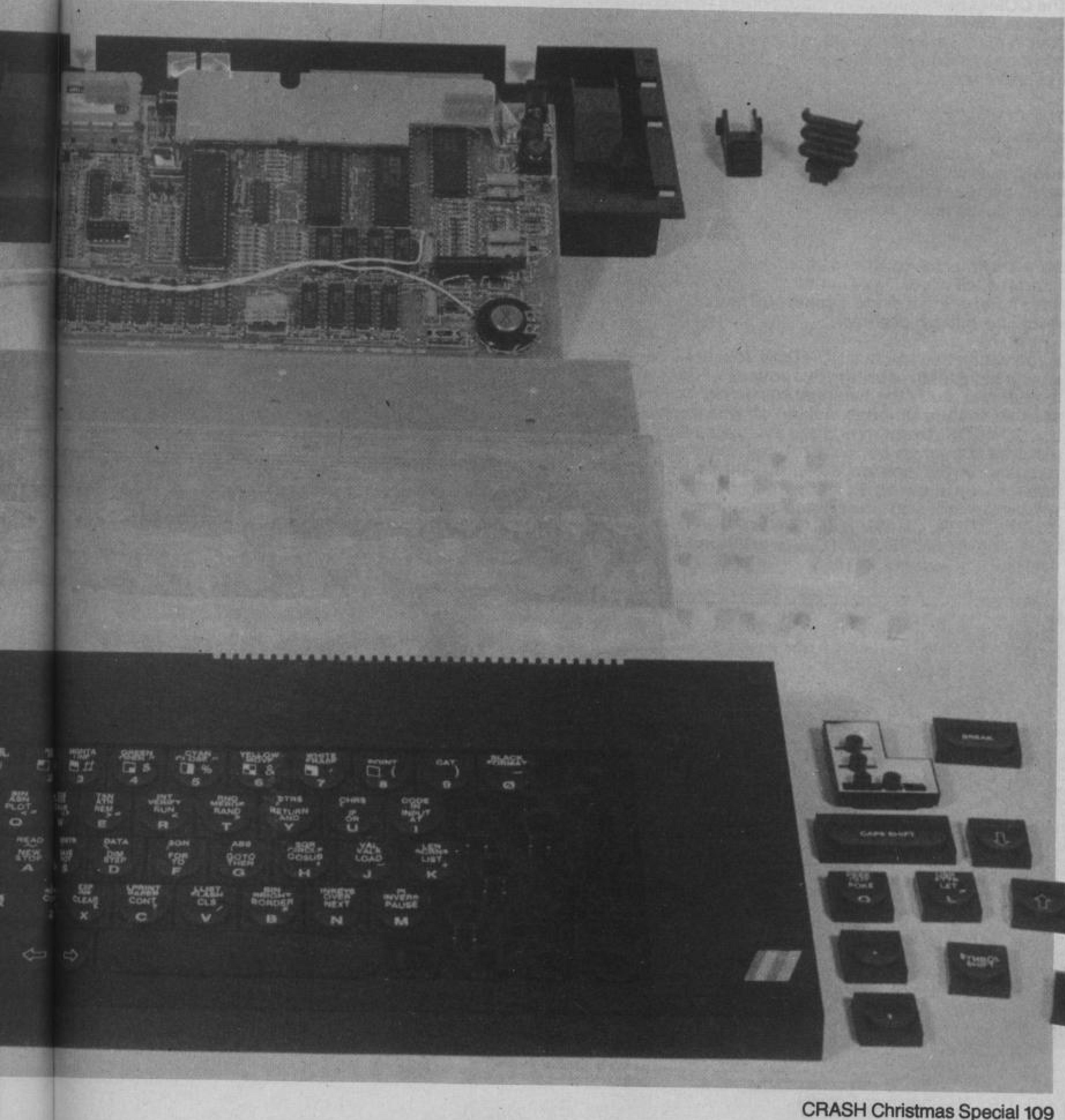
Newcomers to the Spectrum will be faced with a difficult choice. To Spectrum or to Spectrum +, that is the question here.



The ZX 81 membrane keyboard complaints had not even faded, when the Spectrum rubber keys were already getting the full treatment from not too happy users. Given the fact that most competitors have a typewriter style keyboard, there was no way that this situation could continue. True enough, Sir Clive has had to give in to the complaints and provide the Spectrum with a better input facility. His main objective obviously is to bring the Spectrum in line with the likes of Commodore and MSX. By doing this he has eliminated one of the major arguments against the purchase of the Spectrum, but at a cost. The price of the SpectrumY has nearly reached the Commodore level, and the question is whether the extra fifty pounds are wisely invested. Anybody expecting to have got away from the membrane style keyboard will very soon be disillusioned. A look at the construction of the keyboard will soon verify, why the action of the new keyboard does not live up to the cosmetic improvements. Hidden beneath the excellent double injection moulded keys is a modified version of the rubber mat which is responsible for the soggy return force of the keys. The collapsible domes are actuated by a nylon plunger, which provides guidance for the long travel. The early complaints of keytop losses is due to an error in tooling, which does not provide a pressfit between the plunger and the keytop. There should be no problem in correcting this problem on further production. The new key lay-out with the extra keys has increased the layers in the membrane. The extra keys improve program input tremendously. Of significance are especially the extended mode, the edit and delete and the punctuation keys. The special cursor keys are especially useful for the edit mode. Anybody considering upgrading the standard Spectrum with an add-on keyboard will find that for the same extra cost the quality of the key action will definitely be better, but that very few add-on keyboards will offer the extra key facilities provided with the SpectrumY and if so, at a higher cost. The annotation of the keys is excellent and the doubleshot technique guarantees unlimited life and no fading of the lettering. None of the add-on keyboards can match the Sinclair version. Criticism has been raised for the lack of colour coding as with the original Spectrum keyboard, but the various modes are clearly defined by the positioning of the legends.

In conclusion, it will be very difficult to make an outright decision as to whether to go for an add-on keyboard or to go for the official Sinclair version. Touch typists won't have trouble in reaching a fast decision, but I suspect 99% of Spectrum owners don't fall into this category. For these it will be a matter of personal choice.

MPLUS KEYBOARD



WIN A JOYSTICK I

Add something very special to your Spectrum by winning one of five COMCON Programmable Joystick Interfaces by FREL LIMITED.



The COMCON retails at £19.95 and is a useful supplement that is easily programmed to enable your joystick to work with any game. There are six function connectors which you simply plug into the approriate Spectrum key on the mimick panel and, presto! You're away!

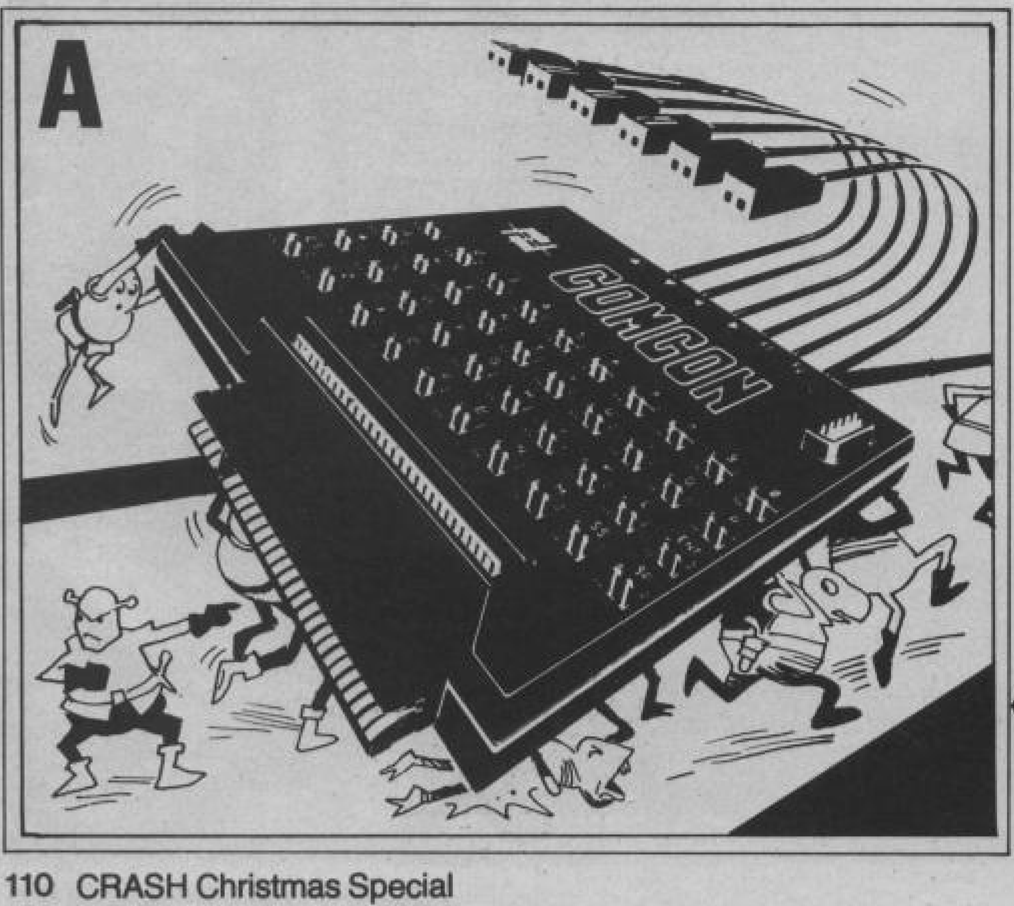
The COMCON features two independent fire actions – Photon Blasters and Neutron Bombs at the touch of your finger. There is also an extension port for other add-ons like Currah Microspeech or for connection to a proper monitor.

The COMCON is compatible with all Atari type joysticks (which means just about everything on the market). The joystick action is also compatible with any add-ons, including Microdrive, making for a truly versatile peice of equipment. Should you be the owner of a new Spectrum+, don't worry, the COMCON fits that too.

As a testimonial to the usefulness of the COMCON Interface, all we can say is that the CRASH reviewers have been using it since it came out, and none of them would be without one now.

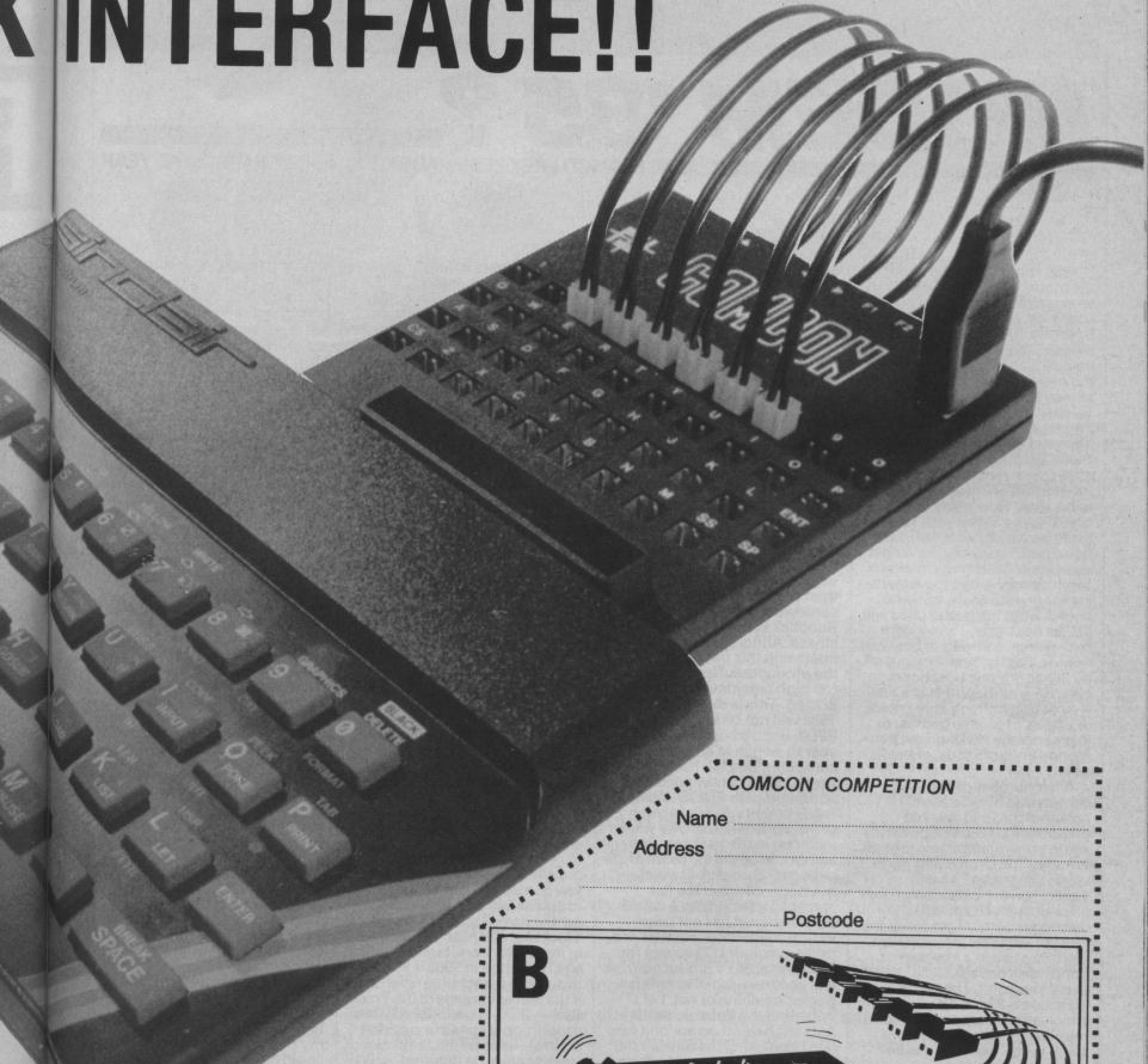
If you would like to win a COMCON Joystick Interface, all you have to do is bring your powers of obsveration to bear and study the two pictures below. As you can see they feature Oli-bugs making off with their copy of the COMCON (these things are everywhere!) The two pictures appear to be identical, but there are 10 differences in the one on the right. Circle the 10 differences on drawing B, fill in the coupon (you can photocopy it if you prefer) and send it to: *COMCON COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB* to arrive no later than first post on *January 18 1985*

A



COMC

K INTERFACE!!



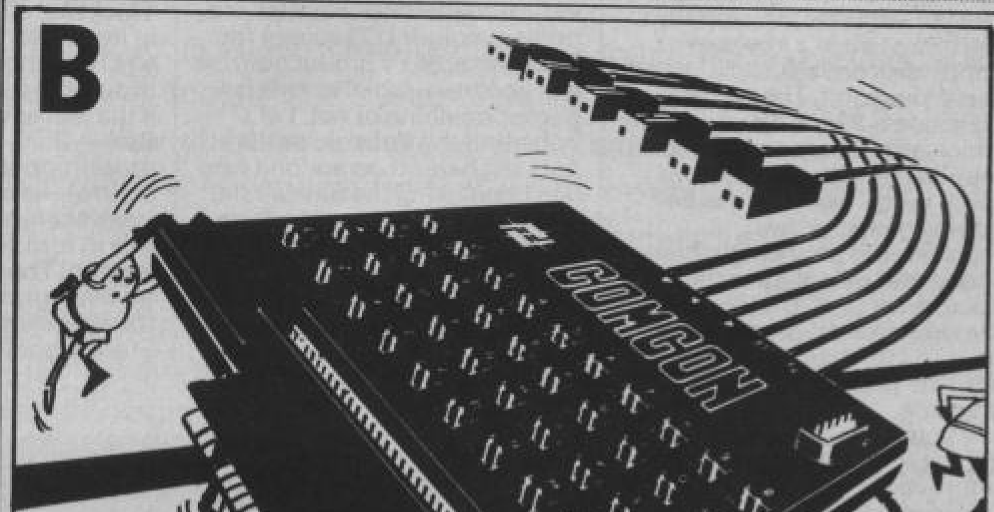
COMCON COMPETITION

Name ....

Address ....

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CON

MODEM '85 ?

FRANCO FREY PEERS AHEAD AT A NEW HARDWARE YEAR

1985 could well be the year of the modems. Several companies have developed low-cost units which enable Spectrums to communicate via the telephone lines. The technology is there, but what about the need for this device? An obvious plus is the access to Teletext services such as Prestel, Ceefax, Oracle, Micronet 800 etc.
these services offer enough in 1985 to warrant the capital investment of a modem remains to be seen. How many households have a TV set with Teletext facilities which, after the initial few days of curiosity, never get used again? Electronic mailbox services may prove too expensive for private users, but who knows what the postal rates will be like next year. The modem may link-up computers between friends, but many will be put off by the enormous telephone bills. Still, perhaps this is a new way of transmitting love letters, or copies of pirated games, or just generally making new penfriends (microfriends, in this case).

A fair number of Spectrum owners will by now have acquired the long awaited microdrives. 1985 will probably see the new waferdrives take off. Whether the extra reliability is worth the extra price will depend on the individual. (The price of the waferdrive cartridges certainly exceeds the Sinclair versions.) Personally I see more use in a low cost floppy disk drive system. Just to prove the point, Timex have launched a 3-inch disk system which also incorporates a communications device with two serial parts. Basically it is an interface/microdrive replacement providing superior speed and reliability to the microdrive unit. This could be the real small business user upgrade for 1985, especially with the promise of a cpm upgrade.

If you are looking for a hard copy system, the situation has improved drastically. The Alphacom 32 printer is the lowest entry point perhaps, but nevertheless it is very reliable. Anything more serious requires either a Centronics interface or the Interface 1 serial communications facility. Either way there are a large number of professional, low cost matrix and daisy wheel printers or even low colour plotters which have come within the reach of most home users, and next year will see the prices drop even more.

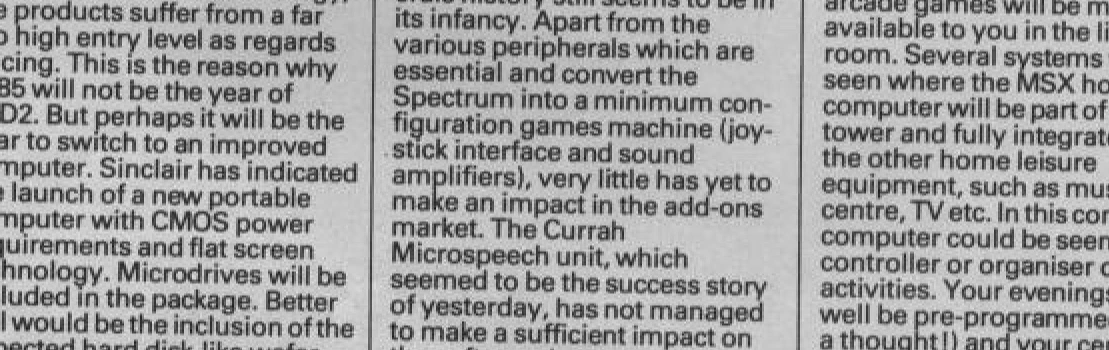
TV manufacturers have realised the potential of TV monitor combos, and the home user will combine the purchase of a computer monitor with that of a second TV set (at a normal television set price). The improvement on the picture quality is well worth the expense —that's if you can afford it, of course. After the lightpen and the digital tracer it is the turn of the touchtablet; this is certainly the best drawing input device to use, but with a price tag higher than the Spectrum itself it has a somewhat limited appeal. Robotics suffers from the same illness. Although there is a lot of interest in this new technology, the products suffer from a far too high entry level as regards pricing. This is the reason why 1985 will not be the year of R2D2. But perhaps it will be the year to switch to an improved computer. Sinclair has indicated the launch of a new portable computer with CMOS power requirements and flat screen technology. Microdrives will be included in the package. Better still would be the inclusion of the expected hard disk-like wafer memory. Whether the flat screen display will be a colour version or not has not been indicated (the Japanese have a brilliant colour LCD screen for their portable TV production), so it is uncertain whether this is a games machine or not. Let's hope that the Polaroid battery gets left behind, as anyone who has been using the Sinclair flat screen television could inform you of the diabolical costs of the same.

Looking forward to a new year can sometimes be as tricky as making pools' predictions. Either one gets it right and joins the self-congratulatory 'I told you so' prophets, or one gets it entirely wrong and admits as much by keeping a distinctly low profile. On the other hand, one can play it safe and give away broad, vague predictions and alter their interpretation as time goes by.

I will leave the doomsday prophecies to the more pessimistic onlookers, who have predicted the collapse of the computer games industry before Sinclair became a household name. Computer games are here to stay. In some way or another they will continue to capture the interest of the game-lovoing crowds. Although the games software has travelled light years and reached an unrecoginsable level in comparison with late 1983, the peripherals history still seems to be in its infancy. Apart from the various peripherals which are essential and convert the Spectrum into a minimum configuration games machine (joystick interface and sound amplifiers), very little has yet to make an impact in the add-ons market. The Currah Microspeech unit, which seemed to be the success story of yesterday, has not managed to make a sufficient impact on the software houses, and very few games provide an incentive to splash out on a speech synthesiser. The much-loved Track Ball still hasn't appeared in large numbers, but this could easily change in 1985 if the price drops to a reasonable level. But if the real advantage of the Track Ball—which is undoubtedly the proportional speed or position control—is to be felt, a special interface will be required, and this in turn will have to be written. The Track Ball will face an even greater problem than the speech synthesiser. The Stack Light Rifle suffered a similar fate, and even today only a handful of programs have been written for this excellent games peripheral. The buyers felt cheated by the sheer lack of software support.

MSX?

1985 should see the make or break of MSX in this country. Several MSX extensions will be launched late next year. Anyone who has been to the computer trade shows in the Far East will recognise the hardware potential behind MSX. Probably the most exceptional facility is the link-up of the video disc system for the arcade-style, random access video backup. With video disc system prices falling to an acceptable level, this means that highly complex arcade games will be made available to you in the living room. Several systems will be seen where the MSX home computer will be part of the Hi-Fi tower and fully integrated with the other home leisure equipment, such as music centre, TV etc. In this context the computer could be seen as controller or organiser of home activities. Your evenings could well be pre-programmed (what a thought!) and your centre would provide you with dim lights, 50 minutes of Dallas, the news, then a spot of relaxing music, an hour or so of arcade adventure, half an hour communications time with your modern associates and friends, and then finally switch itself off, making sure that when you leave the room the lights and heating go off as well. Not really my cup of tea, but who knows, I could have a different outlook altogether at the end of 1985. In the meantime I'll stick to my Spectrum and hang on more and more peripherals until the power supply packs up. . . .



Spectrum Speech Synthesizer!

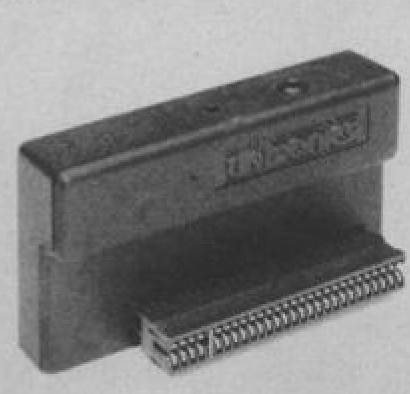


The dk'tronics synthesizer, like all their other peripherals is both Spectrum & Spectrum plus compatible, it uses the popular SLO/256 speech chip and has an almost infinite vocabulary. It is supplied with a text to speech converter for ease of speech output creation. Everything you wish to be spoken is entered in normal English, without special control codes or characters, it is therefore extremely easy to use. The voicing of the words is completely user transparent and the computer can carry on its normal running of a program while the speech chip is talking.

Although there are only 26 letters in the alphabet, letters have a totally different sound when used in different words. For example, The "a" in Hay is much longer and softer than in Hat. When you speak you automatically make adjustments because you know just how a word should sound. Not quite so easy with a computer. After looking at other speech synthesizers we decided that it was essential that the dk'tronics Spectrum Speech would offer a simple system that would enable the user to produce realistic speech that was instantly recognisable.

The solution to the problem was extremely complicated, it required hours of programming to enable the computer to look at the individual letters that make up each word and compare there relative position to each other before deciding on the appropriate sound.

I am delighted that we have now perfected what I consider to be the best Spectrum Speech Synthesizer on the market, one which has achieved my aim, within the limitations of the allophones, of producing realistic speech.



At **only £24.95** the dk'tronics speech synthesizer represents remarkable value for money. Naturally it is compatible with their other peripherals which can be used via the rear through connector.

Available from department stores and good computer shops everywhere or direct from

dk'tronics, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3AQ. 1CM
Tel. (0799) 26350 add £1.25 post and packing.

preview

It was during the Personal Computer Games show at Solihull, held last summer, that ELITE SOFTWARE announced their intention to set up deals with American television companies to licence well known shows for the production of computer games. And they have been as good as their word. CRASH takes a stop press sneak preview at the latest game from ELITE - AIRWOLF.

Airwolf

After Elite's debut game, KOKOTONI WILF, came the first of the games adapted from well-known American TV shows, THE FALL GUY (which is reviewed in this issue). Their fourth game will be the officially licenced adaption of the popular car smashing DUKES OF HAZZARD. But before that we can look forward to yet another helicopter-based game in AIRWOLF.

At the time Elite began negotiations for the rights to the series, AIRWOLF had not been seen in Britain, so in a way it was a gamble for the software house. A gamble that looks like paying off handsomly for the Midlands-based company, as AIRWOLF began its first run on British Television only a few weeks ago, and initial reactions to the series indicate that it will run for at least a further two series when the present one finishes in the New Year.

Elite didn't have it all their own way. The market for signing deals with TV shows is becoming extremely competetive, and the Manchester software house, Ocean, were also after a licence for AIRWOLF.

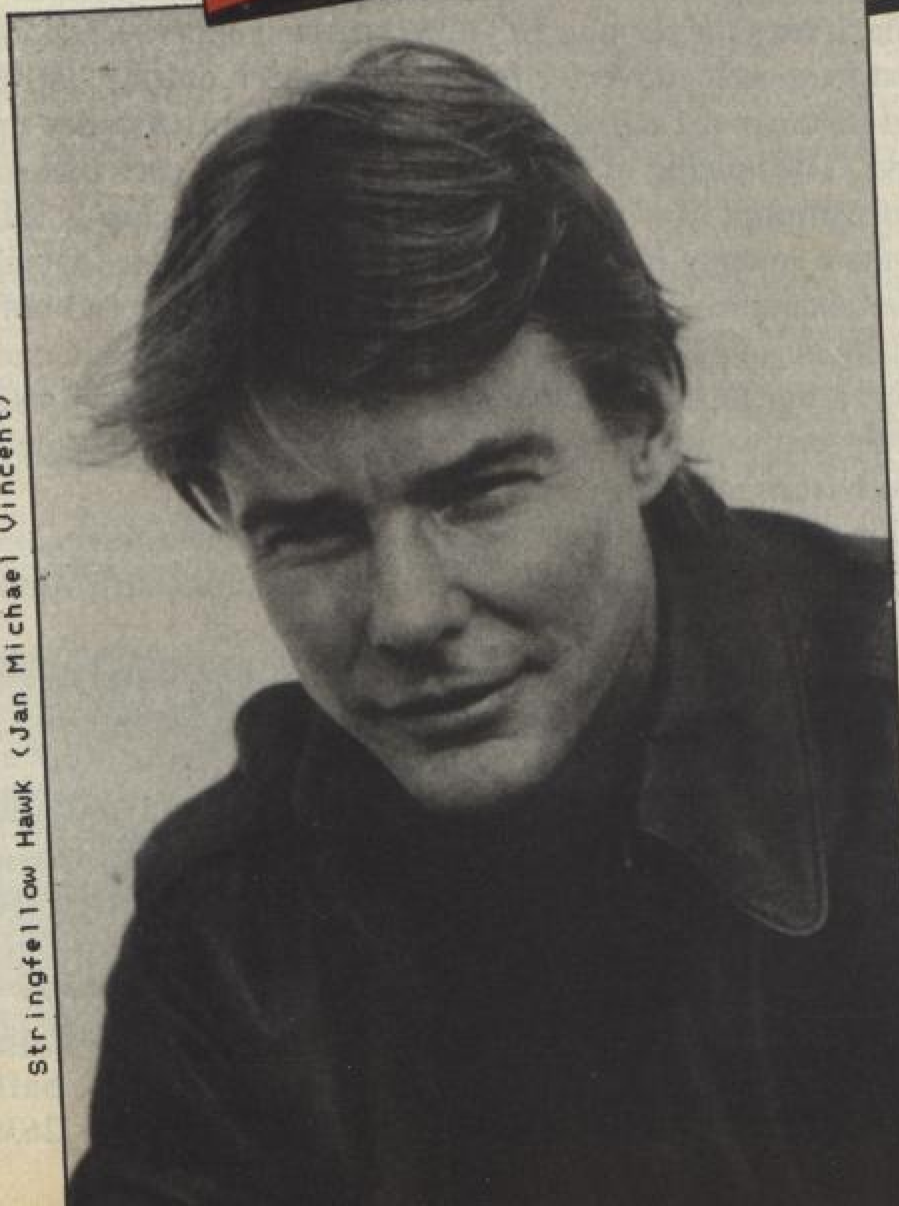
For those who haven't actually seen any of the programmes yet, AIRWOLF stars JAN MICHAEL VINCENT and ERNEST BORGNINE, as the pilots of helicopters. Jan Michael Vincent plays a hero with the unlikely name of Stringfellow Hawk, who is constantly trying to rescue his brother. Naturally there are many different adventures to impede his task, quite a few of them involving the rescue of Santini (Borgnine) - a man always getting mixed up in something or other a bit on the shady side.

But the real star of the series is the shark-like monster fighting machine called AIRWOLF, a helicopter capable of taking out a small army single handed. It is AIRWOLF and its amazing capabilities around which Elite have constructed their new game.

The basic objective follows that of the TV series.



The amazing flying arsenal - AIRWOLF.

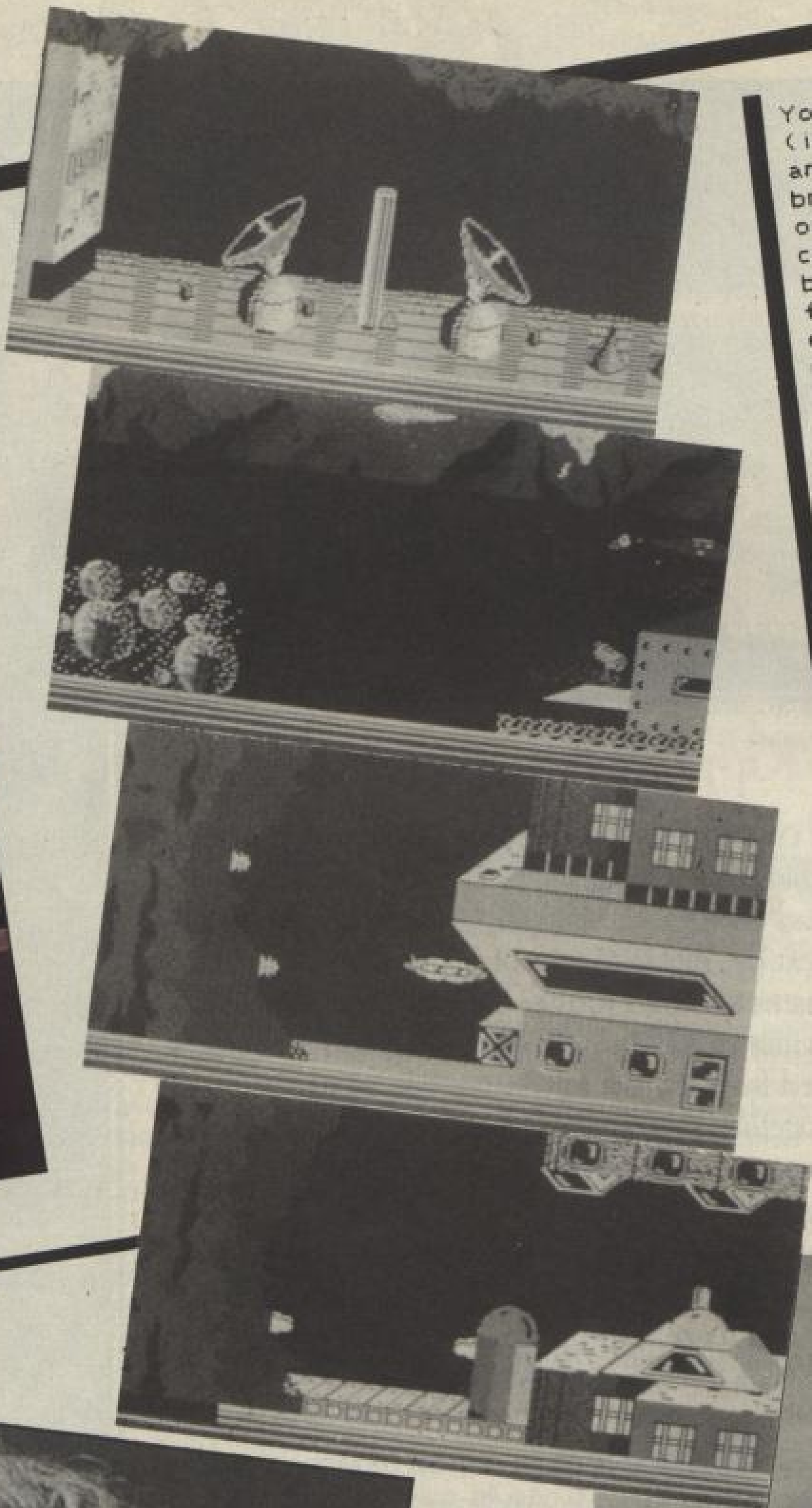


Stringfellow Hawk (Jan Michael Vincent)



Co-star, Ernest Borgnine.

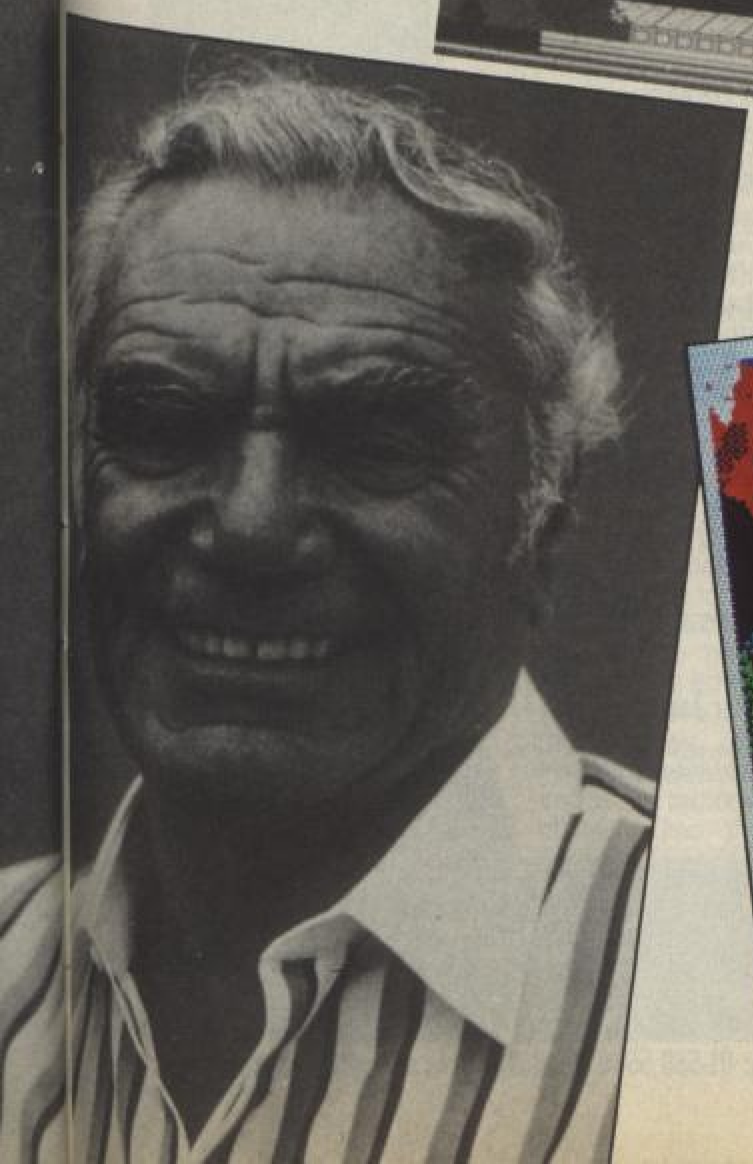




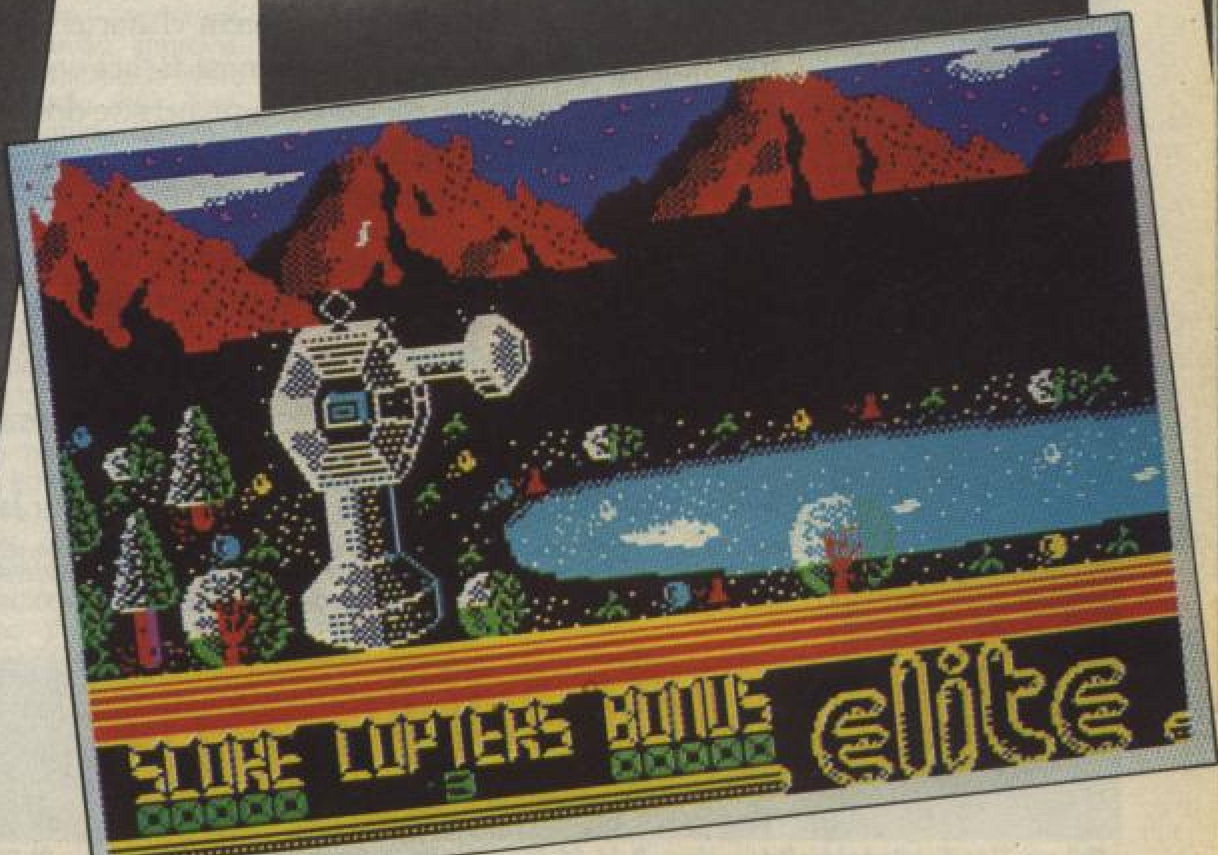
You play Stringfellow Hawk (inside AIRWOLF of course) and you must rescue your brother who has been imprisoned somewhere inside a deep cavern complex. The game is based on a 16 screen grid of four by four, but only the outer screens are used for playing, making 12 in all. These are linked either vetically or horizontally, and it isn't just a question of getting through one and then onto the next. Adventure elements demand that you discover how the screens, and what happens in them, relate to each other, and you will have to advance to a screen, do something, and then return to an earlier screen where your actions have altered the circumstances, before carrying on.

The game starts in the cold Antarctic Mountains (the colour screen dump) and ends in the bowels of the giant cave system which you will have to explore. The screen pictures on these pages are from dumps made by Elite for this article, and as such they do not contain any graphics of AIRWOLF itself. To get a glimpse of the fabulous machine, you will have to wait for the full review next month, or buy a copy as soon as it's released!

irwolf









The Red Kipper Flies at Midnight

YOU GET HOME ONE EVENING to discover a message on your answering machine. Something you'd thought hidden for good has reared its ugly head once again. Valkyrie 17 is active.

Over the next five nights a series of frantic phone calls convince you that the matter deserves further investigation. You receive a dossier on the activities of Valkyrie 17. Pieced together from fragmentary reports culled from the last forty years you slowly begin to put the whole thing together. Drakenfeur, Heinrich and Reichsmuller. The badge pressed into your hand on the station at __________. And that last desperate call for help from the Glitz Hotel overlooking Lake Bruntz.

Your cover is good. Very good in fact. You spend a few days sniffing around and then head up towards Lake Bruntz. You check in to the Glitz Hotel. It's the last lead you have. You seem to be getting nowhere.

Then on your way to the bar you sense a movement in the shadows. You feel a blow on your temple. And everything goes black...

Valkyrie 17 is an Adventure featuring both graphic and text locations. You will meet several different characters some of whom may help you while others see your demise as their sole purpose in life.

Included in the pack is a comprehensive dossier on Valkyrie 17. On the reverse of the cassette tape are the answerphone messages. And then of course there's the game itself.

LOADING TIME	**5½ minutes.**	**MICRODRIVE**	**X/FER FUNCTION**
LOCATIONS	**100+**	**FUN FACTOR 8**	
LEVEL	**?**		
SOUND	**Beep Beep**		

HINTS

Watch your back, try not to get killed and mind your language.

VALKYRIE 17

Valkyrie 17 is distributed by Palace Virgin Gold, 69 Flempton Road, London E10 7NL. Telephone: 01-539 5566. Available from all leading wholesalers.



DEREK BREWSTER'S

Adventure Trail

Our Adventure Trail columnist, DEREK BREWSTER, sums up his feelings about the state of Spectrum adventures as we prepare to enter a new year. . .

THE VICTORIAN CHIP

ADVENTURING, as so many have come to know it, began with a mainframe and a copy of *Colossal Cavern* which even now is availbale for the home micro. Why should this be so when the technical improvements in the writing and implementation of adventure has increased markedly since that time? The reason gives a clue to the special attributes every popular adventure possesses, namely, a plot in which an adventurer can lose himself. The problems must be pitched somewhere in that narrow band where they are difficult and thought-provoking but, hopefully, entirely logical. But where an adventure really shows its class is when it often has the explorer preoccupied with two or more problems at the same time and can enable progress by more than one solution.

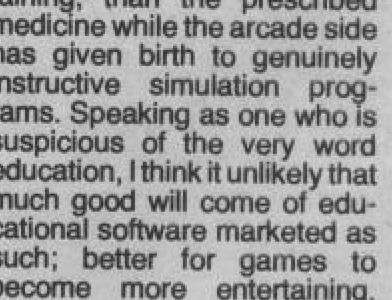
In an editorial some months ago I commented on how it is unwise for a company to release too many games on a modular basis. It would seem this advice to some extent is unneceassary as market forces have forced more selective releases from both adventure and arcade camps alike. CRASH was criticised some time ago for reviewing all games released instead of just those that merit distinction and yet the irony is, of the plethora of publications that line the newsagents' shelves, CRASH is now the one, with its CRASH SMASH awards, to distinguish and more overtly praise those games of the highest claibre every month. These pick of the bunch, considering how far software has come in the last year, are great games indeed – a trip to the arcades is positively dull when compared to the choice and quality now available in millions of homes. Games playing has come a long way and will go much further.

People's expectations of game software is much higher than when microcomputing was a fresh and novel pastime. Everyone tried their hand at programming because they thought that's what micros were for – to learn all about programming, and the standard of software was initially low enough to encourage imitation and even improvement. However, people were soon glad to see their computers do anything following their own fruitless struggles. Now the scene is different; many see their computers for what they are – games machines.

Take the Spectrum's main rival, the Commodore 64. When first marketed, it was as a business computer to the incredible extent that it was only to be had in business shops. The inference was you couldn't have it for anything as frivolous as playing games. Hindsight, and in particular two important factors, made things clearer. One, the arrival of a small business computer on the scene with the likes of the Advance lined up with the Spectrum and the C64, which gave the lie to the idea that a business system could cost anything less than £1000. Two, playing games isn't quite the frivolous nonentity some might have had us to believe. At a time when enforced leisure is the order of the day, playing computer games is a much better recreation than watching feeble-minded quiz shows on TV (Chanel 4 made a brave attempt to keep television alive but alas their resolve faded with their fortunes). Computer games are sophisticated enough to be intellectually demanding; adventures are used in education as they are better, certainly more entertaining, than the prescribed medicine while the arcade side has given birth to genuinely instructive simulation programs. Speaking as one who is suspicious of the very word education, I think it unlikely that much good will come of educational software marketed as such; better for games to become more entertaining, thought-provoking and informative. A return to Victorian Values is one thing, being bored to brain-death is quite another.

Colossal Cavern spawned many text-only adventures in the early days of home computing but some luminaries of the computing press fall woefully short of their roles to inform of the differences between a knocked-off job and the program of several months incubation. This puzzled me enough (brought to a head having read a guide-book to adventures which was the most partisan load of drivel) to encourage my own entry onto the scene and the views which follow.

The modern equivalent of the original, good, mostly Basic, text-only adventure is the *Ket Trilogy*, a series of adventures marked by their sensibly cheap price, super atmosphere, easy and logical problems, and user-friendliness. A company that had machine code games right from the start was Artic Computing, who produced highly competent adventures with problems that lent themselves well to a new magazine phenomenon, the adventure



ADVENTURE TRAIL REVIEW RATINGS

ATMOSPHERE: reflects quality of location description and graphics and how credibly characters behave.

VOCABULARY: the completeness of the vocabulary and friendliness of response. All words and associated words (objects etc) in location descriptions should be included.

LOGIC: reflects the logic of the problems encountered and whether or not you are likely to be killed without warning or chance of escape.

DEBUGGING: indicates the level of crashproofing. A program should not be crashed simply by making an incorrect entry or by pressing an unfortunate combination of keys.

OVERALL: general rating based on price and the other ratings BUT NOT AN AVERAGE OF THE OTHER RATINGS.



help page, since they were very difficult and had but one solution, The early games were clinical by today's standards, needing the methodical approach of the crossword devotee with little attention paid to building up a consistent atmosphere. The early Artic software clearly had some appeal beyond that of its competitors but had one distinction which was to prove decisive in the struggle for survival in a very competetive market – the software was in your local computer shop and you could actually hand over your money and buy it.

Graphics were the next obvious improvement but alas many early efforts resulted in poor graphics or slow response times. However, one game stood out like no other. Based upon one of the most famous works of fantasy fiction, it marked a new era in book/computer program tie-ins, but more tellingly, in big finance and high pressure salesmanship. A cottage industry now seemed on the brink of renting out office space throughout the land but no one was complaining over the new commercialism because it had produced a computer program every bit as good as the advertisment suggested. It was, of course, *The Hobbit* from Melbourne House. Years ahead of its time with super graphics and the first game to attempt true character interaction. Later a similar game to *The Hobbit* provided an option for those who had mastered its complexity. *Fantasia Diamond* from Hewson Consultants had an interesting storyline and endearing characters.

Character interaction was visibly demonstrated in another megagame of 1983, *Valhalla*, which introduced animation to adventuring, but Basic was too slow for the project and it is doubtful whether the interactions were ever truly intelligent. Unlike *The Hobbit*, the game didn't quite live up to the adverts. Animation may well prove a redundant offshoot for the unmodified Spectrum since it adds little to the intelligence of an adventure but consumes a vast amount of memory – memory better used increasing interaction with the computer. Character interaction has recently reached a new level of intelligence with a further breakthrough from Melbourne House. The worthy successor to *The Hobbit*, *Sherlock* in the end proved too ambitious but nonetheless is a significant milestone on the road to intelligent characters. Perhaps with the removal of the inadequate graphics (a concession to market forces) the game could have struck out more decisively along the path of meaningful character interaction with this becoming the sole selling point. Whatever, *Sherlock* will become a memorable milestone.

The Quill has given the chance to many who haven't got the time or inclination to program a machine code game from scratch, and who can blame them, it is debatable whether any 40K adventure needs to be 100% machine code. Gilsoft's creation has lead to a great surge of adventure releases but most, sadly, do not acknowledge the need to give the customer a much greater depth in theme and plot in return for the limitations imposed by *The Quill*. However, notable exceptions are classics in their own right: *Denis Through the Drinking Glass*, *Hampstead* and *Tower of Despair*. *The Quill* is just the most public face of a good number of utilities employed by many adventure software houses. Level 9 make no secret of their own 'a code' used to devise *Snowball* and boast an ever-increasing library of compression techniques used to instigate the likes of *Return to Eden*. These games are twice the length you might expect of a well-written game and are, in addition, user-friendly, highly intelligent and imaginative, with good descriptions producing a rich atmosphere.

Just as some people look with suspicion toward a Quilled game (has it just been knocked-off?) so they might well be wary of the five or six part megagame. Domark's *Eureka!* is composed of many parts, like Mastervision's *Wrath of Magra*, but it is my view that such games are overly involved and convoluted, and this apparent complexity is to smokescreen what is a shortfall in programming skills; size is simply not an important factor, anyone can write 200K of gobbledegook.

Some journalists are forever going on about the great American Software invasion from across the Atlantic but perhaps it has dissipated against our shores and I am sure even a flight out to the

VOTING FOR THE ADVENTURE CHART

The CRASH Adventure Chart has picked up considerably since we first introduced it, with more and more votes coming in every day! To make life easier for sorting, we are now providing a separate write-in form, so please use it for the Adventure Chart, and not the one included at the bottom of the Hotline details. If you are voting on both charts, you may send both forms together in the same envelope of course.

How to register your votes

There seems to have been some confusion in the minds of voters for the Adventure Chart, so to clarify the situations, here's how we do it. You may vote for **as many titles as you wish** (not just five as in the Hotline Chart) and you may award any of them points out of ten. So, for instance, you might vote for seven titles giving each of them ten points if you think they are worth it, or only three and give them one each. These votes are then added up for each title and the total is divided by the number of people who voted for the program resulting in an aggregate figure. From these figures, the top thirty adventure games are taken in descending order.

Phoned-in votes are accepted over the Hotline **(0584 3015)** in the same way (please state that you are voting for the Adventure Chart at the beginning), and may also be written in letter form without the use of the coupon if you prefer.

Adventure Chart Prize Draw

And don't forget that, like the Hotline Chart, you can win prizes! Each month we draw a winner from the voters, who receives £40 worth of software and a CRASH T-shirt, with four runners-up each getting a T-shirt and a mini-subscription to CRASH for three months.

ADVENTURE CHART COUPON

Remember – points out of ten for as many titles as you wish.

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

tír na nòg



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States would only confirm that which I have long suspected – there's precious little to shout about above the razzmatazz.

One game released this summer was so original and outstandingly brilliant it caught many on the hop just as they were about to forget of software innovation until the autumn. *Lords of Midnight* represented a significant leap in programming skills used to develop an entirely new theme. The Land of Midnight is an extraordinary invention and anyone who has not yet seen it has not seen half of what the Spectrum has to offer. The game is the crowning jewel in microcomputer games respectability.

So what can we expect from the future? Well, graphics of a consistently high standard are on the menu, but more than this, they will become an integral part of the adventure and not just a decorative appendage tacked on to brighten up proceedings. Graphics will broaden out from just pictures to diagrams, charts and even to the map that at the moment is painstakingly committed to paper. The pictures will carry clues and figures showing which characters are presnt. These characters will be larger than life as they realistically go about their everyday lives cementing a greater belief in the whole adventure. The microdrive will finally be exploited for what it is, a refined fast storage device with immense possibilities, and the days of solitary computing may seem a thing of the past as the Spectrum's networking capabilites string along the thoughts of many minds.

MAFIA CONTRACT

Producer: **Atlantis Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **Quill**
Author: **N. Smyth**

Atlantis are one of a growing number of new companies who have endeavoured to bring the public what it wants at a price it can afford. If this game is typical of their range all I can say is they are doing a very good job as *Mafia Contract* is not a bad effort and yet can be purchased with only one week's pocket money.

If you have read that marvellous book, *The Godfather*, then you'll know what to expect from this game – a compelling mixture of criminal persuasion and dastardly double-dealing. Like in the famous book you are in the most lucrative blackmail market outside of Chicago, amongst the familiar pattern of intersecting streets and avenues of New York. You find yourself, a hitman for Don Capolla, in a sleazy hotel trying to lie low but ending up in the thick of it. You answer the phone in trepidation since silence is only broken for important news, and in this business that's always bad news. Last night Capolla's son was assassinated and the gang has got a list of possible traitors down to a tidy number – and one of the names is yours. Don Capolla wants to see you now at Mario's Bar, or else. Leaving your room and descending in the lift to the lobby you notice the first graphics which are very simple but quickly and effectively drawn. The program is friendly and responsive allowing you many diversions from the mainstream of the plot. For example, ring the bell at reception and you meet the drunken manager whereupon GIVE KEY and KILL MANAGER both evoke different responses.

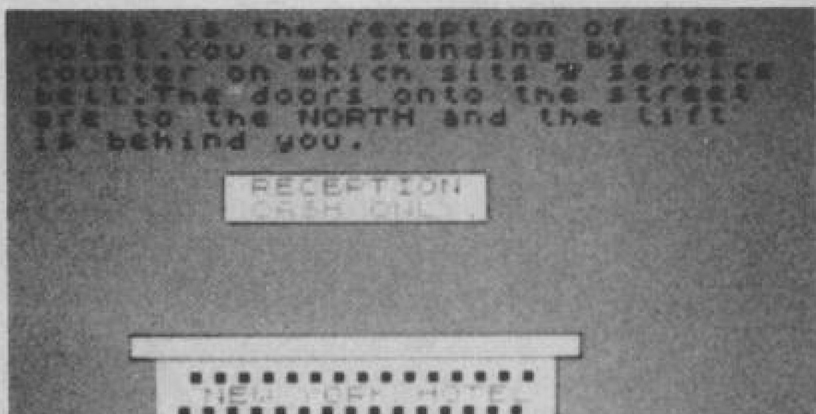
Wandering around the streets, avenues and alleys you soon pick up on how to act streetwise if you are gonna make yourself into a feared and respected hood. Sadly, inevitably as you'll soon discover playing the game, there is one of the most infuriating random killings I've ever met. 'Suddenly you hear the screech of tyres and a black Cadillac pulls up. 3 men jump out and fire continuously at you. The bullets rip into you. Within seconds you are dead.' This passage comes up flashing glaringly at inopportune moments and you soon dread turning into a new location in case the program has vouched your time is up.

Mafia Contract is very much worth the meagre investment of £1.99 and compares favourably with games three times the price. Responses are fast and friendly, the graphics are very simple but neat and well presented and good descriptions add to a super, despicable plot.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy
Graphics: some, simple but well drawn
Presentation: good
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: very fast
Special features:
General rating: good value.

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	6
Logic	7
Debugging	10
Overall value	7



THE KEY TO TIME



Producer: **Lumpsoft**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **Quill**
Author:

The Key To Time is Lumpsoft's first adventure and is all about a time traveller who was all the rage when people used to watch television. The loading screen shows a picture of a police box and funny little robots with a bad case of metallic pimples and tunnel vision compounded by the position of their only eye on the end of a stalk.

Apparently it is a bad time for time travellers what with time storms distorting travel coordinates which might lead anywhere and it proves imperative that someone recovers the object that can dispel the storms for good. At a meeting of the High Council of Time Lords one senior member asked, 'Who can dispel the time storms?' But this was taken as a command by the others and so you, The Doctor, ended up with the job.

On your first attempt at the game it's better to ask for HELP rather than STARTing straight off so you can gather some useful information. 'In this adventure you must guide your earlier persona by sending him messages through this Time Lord telepathic controller, cunningly disguised as a Sinclair Spectrum.' Here you are told of the game's intricacies including a timely list of recommended verbs including a general HELP, a more specific HELP(TIMESCANNER) and WAIT. The HELP is not as useful as it could be because it only



results in a random selection from three or four phrases, one of which reads 'Never eat anything bigger than your head,' a saying reminiscent of the work parodied by Lumpsoft's next program to be released, *Malice in Wonderland*. The other, more specific help command is very useful in that constructions like HELP(DALEK) give encyclopedic information concerning a certain object or creature, eg. cybermen are allergic to gold. I really do like this kind of encyclopedic reference material as it was what we all thought computers were about, indeed what they are good at, until the limitations of micro memory become apparent. In this respect, I can't wait to see what adventure games the QL can produce. The WAIT command begins mimicking *The Hobbit* but soon departs with an amusingly prolonged diversion.

The vocabulary is very friendly with constructions such as GO(TARDIS) and ENTER(CRACK) equally helpful and the plot is similarly responsive; everything can be examined and if you look at the screen you find 'The Tardis materialised. Atmosphere: breathable.' Swearing will bring the wrath of Mary Whitehouse down upon your head leaving you to regenerate into your next personna, perhaps this time the chap who is a trifle absent-minded and plays a pipe.

Time travel is the core of the game and if you find play relatively easy as I did, then you will proceed quite quickly through the five time zones, although you may well use up a few of the Doctor's characters. Moving through the likes of Daleks and Cybermen you arrive at Gallifrey where you enter, presumably, the final stages around the president's office. If the game's tricky moments hinder progress then you may have time to ponder on the difficulty of getting any score higher than Ø or how to travel from one time zone to another in the Tardis, an operation which involves a tricky combination of lever pulling and button pressing.

The Key To Time is a very worthy effort from Lumpsoft combining a friendly response with an interesting plot and amusing interludes. A text-only Quilled game with a familiar theme but very well executed.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: mostly easy
Graphics: none
Presentation: very good
Input facility: verb/noun, pretends to be more complex but other words are ignored
Response: very fast
General rating: good.

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	8
Debugging	10
Overall value	7

The Staff of Zaranol

Producer: **C. C. S.**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **Quill**
Author: **M. J. Gearing**

You are the apprentice of Zaranol, the Master Wizard, who stumbles upon one of the old Master's spell books while he is away at an annual general meeting. Calling Lan, your friend and helper, you decide to try one of the spells. Unfortunately all does not go well. During the spell a demon appears and none of your spells of banishment work. Eventually it speaks, 'I curse you weakling,' and with those few words it is gone. Mortified, you look to Lan for reassurance. Lan chuckles and says first you must find the demon's name and the nature of the curse. Then in order to banish the demon you must use the great staff of Zaranol and the tooth of a dragon. Finally, and most difficult of all, find the Master's secret room because only there can you create the spell needed. Promising to help if called, Lan disappears.

The challenge of this game does not lie in the small number of locations (45) but in the complexity of interpreting the trail of the various clues available. It is well worth setting off with I for Inventory as you will find the object that gets you out of your first predicament does not lie in or about the table, chair or old chest. As is suggested in the blurb it will pay to call Lan to help when your own attempts come to nought. If you are doing well you should soon be greeted with the 'Arthame. . . with this safely in your hand, draw a circle where 'er you stand!' And you would be wise to do exactly as instructed. Hence, 'the room shudders, your vision wavers. . .' and it's by way of magic and not by stealth as such that you escape the confines of the first location. This method of advance is repeated often throughout the adventure, magic used with craft imparted by the books, scrolls, robes and staffs providing your means of progress and therby reducing the parts played by lengthy, involved reasoning which is typical of, say, an Artic adventure. Indeed it is difficult to recall any great number of real problems posed throughout the entire adventure; progress is mostly assured by simple exploration and examination of everything about you.

The Staff of Zaranol is easily mapped, has magical problems that are quite easy and creates a good atmosphere as you move around the Master's Castle. The dictionary of recommended verbs and special verbs provided at the very beginning are very useful and this along with the game's fundamental simplicity will introduce a beginner to the delights of adventuring and perhaps show, once again, just what a great program *The Quill* has turned out to be.

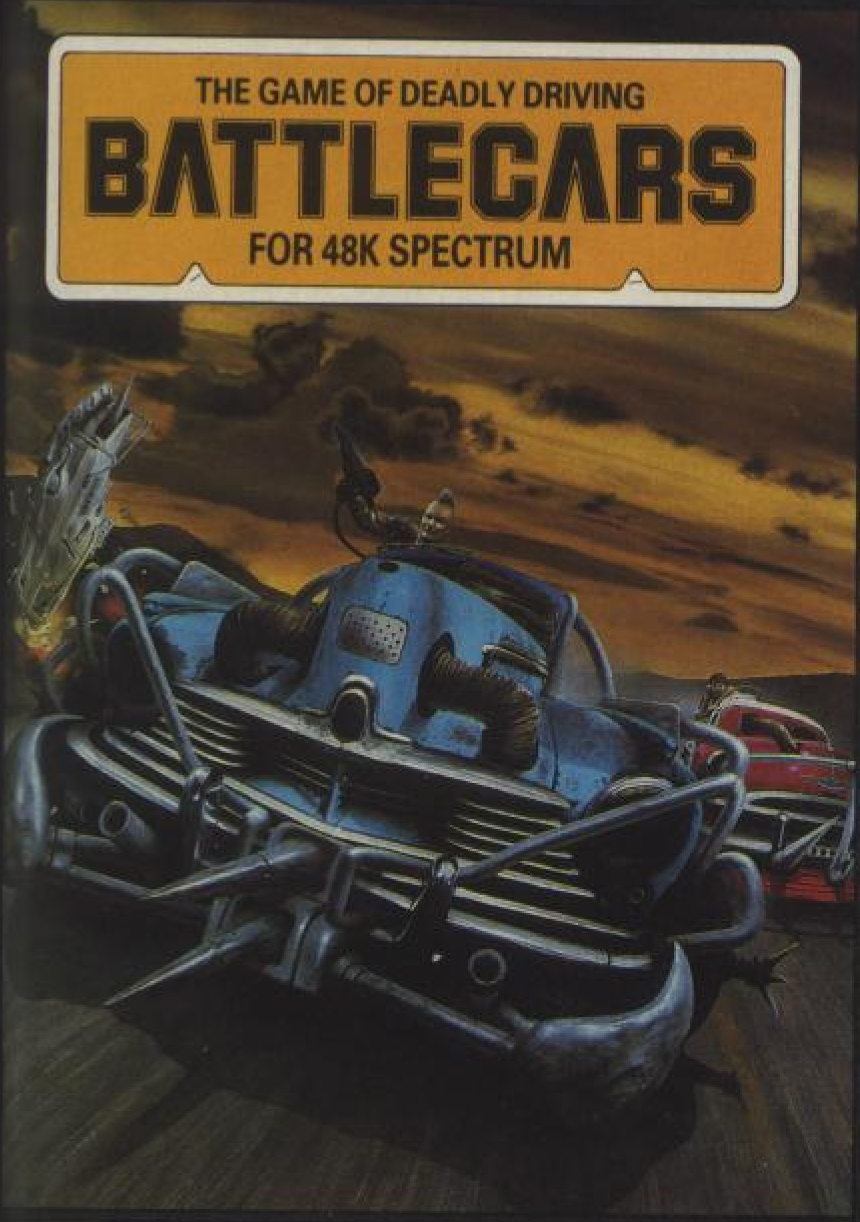
COMMENTS

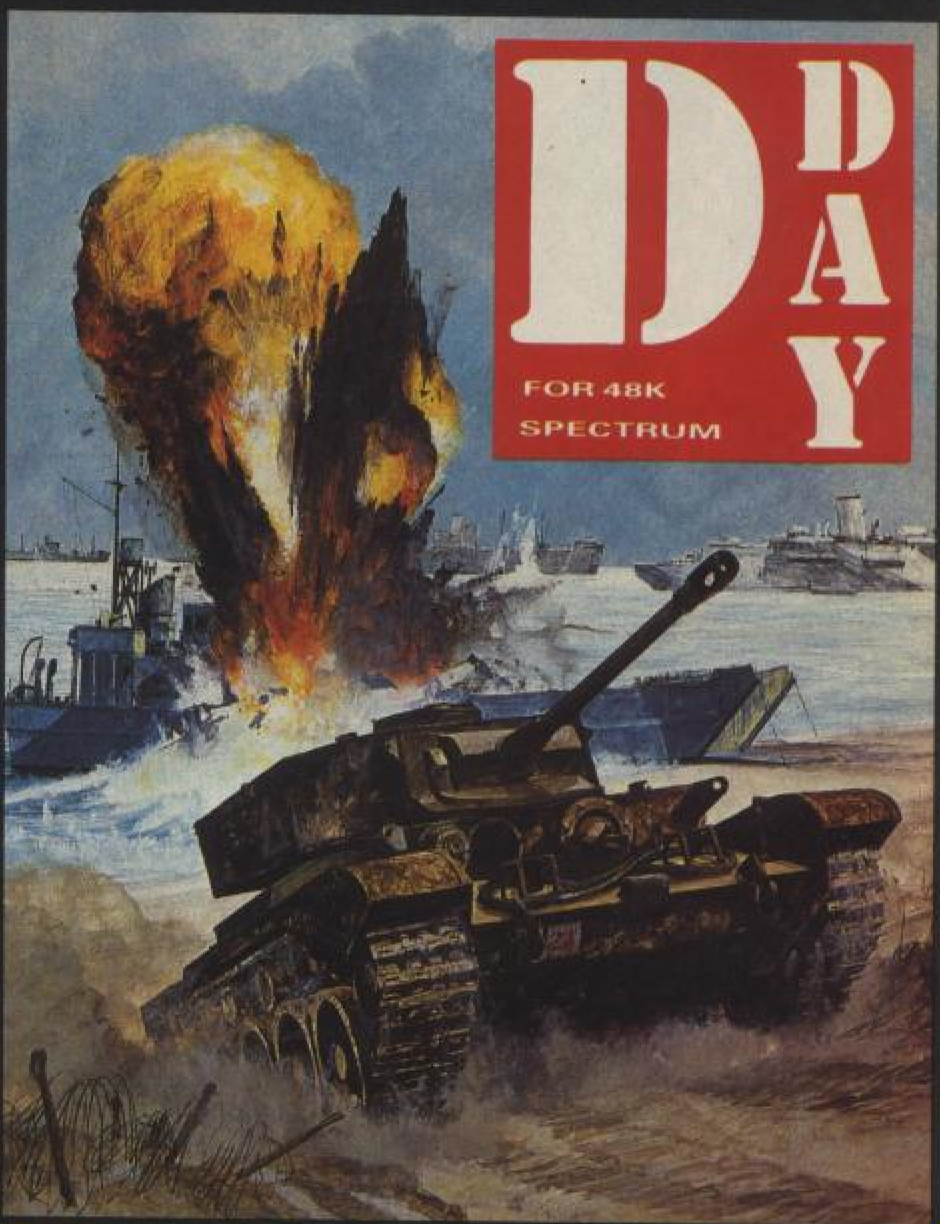
Difficulty: quite easy
Graphics: none
Presentation: location descriptions in capitals and a little difficult to read
Input facility: as all Quill games
General rating: one of C. C. S.'s better games

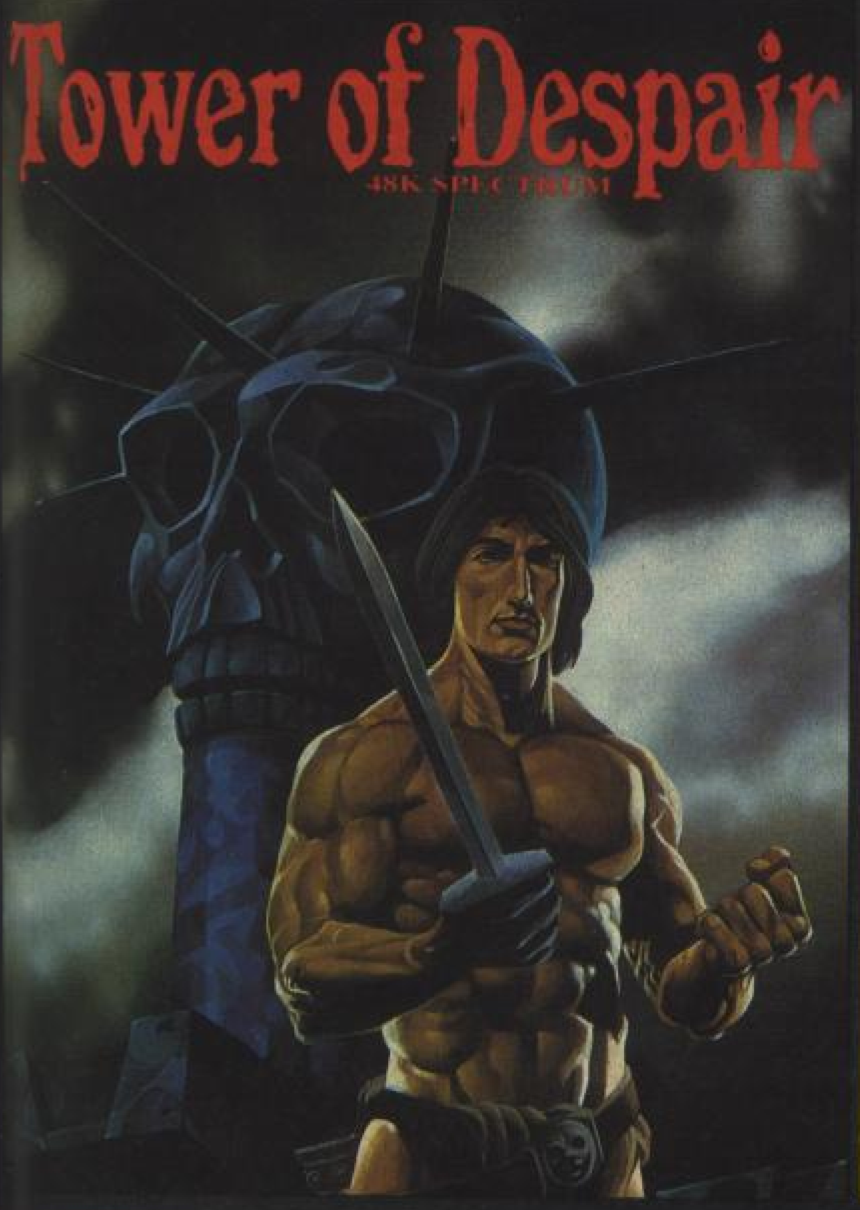
Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	6
Logic	7
Debugging	10
Overall value	6



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THE RUNES OF ZENDOS

Producer: **Dorcas Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Chris Dorell**

Dorcasia was a pleasant fertile land until the wizard Zendos cast the spell of darkness, plunging the country into perpetual gloom, forcing all the citizens of the tiny principality to pledge allegiance to him. A hero must take on the twelve different adventures and find and destroy the twelve runic hour glasses hidden deep within his magical castle, releasing the months and returning Dorcasia to the natural forces of the seasons. To protect the hour glasses and keep their runic inscriptions secret, Zendos has placed them in twelve separate rooms, each linked to an exterior gateway by a devious route. Each adventure has unique spells and problems to ensure a new challenge is provided on each occasion. The game features full animation, sentence input, sound effects and save game facilities to tape and microdrive.

When the game loads you are at the start of adventure one. At any time you can switch to the start of a different adventure by entering, for example, 'adventure eight'. Status (or ?) gives information regarding the adventure you are in; eg. Adventure 1, Strength 25, Provisions 25, Luck 10, Performance 80 (how much of the adventure you have completed). Further information regarding what you are carrying, the spells you know and what you are wearing is also detailed. You can wear one item on your head and one on your body; if you remove something you will then be carrying it. You begin each adventure with a supply of provisions eaten in quantities from 1 – 12 to increase your strength, eg. EAT THREE Items of food along the way replenishes strength depleted during fighting and running.

Vocabulary is surprisingly particular as you must type in the exact letters to make up the required words with only a few stock abbreviations for left (l), right (r), up (u), down (d), passage (p) and quickly (q). However, editing makes full use of the Spectrum cursor movement and delete functions which greatly facilitates entry. ENTER repeats the last command even after starting to type something else if this is first deleted. Input can be, and often must be, quite lengthy and involved, eg. ATTACK THE GUARD WITH THE MIGHTY AXE and UNLOCK THE DOOR WITH THE GOLDEN KEY. The program will accept all words it has displayed.

Whenever you meet a creature its strength and yours are displayed in a pennant at the top left of the screen. If a creature is very strong you will need more than your bare hands. Fighting is seldom the only option; often befriending a creature or casting an appropriate spell marks the way forward. To cast a spell you must have found it first and which therefore will appear in your knowledge list in the current adventure. Using charms and lucky items may improve your luck.

The Runes of Zendos is a very graphically entertaining adventure with smooth, scrolling animation sending your character left and right through passageways, up and down steps of ladders and striking blows in battle with the various zombies, skeletons, werewolves and all manner of exotic assailants. Much of the language is atypical of the arcade-adventure scene with l and r keys chosen for movement and TAKE with no GET option. The problems are logical, more so than in many text adventures, and the game is certain to take some time to complete as three hours were needed for the first of twelve sections. Although the game stands up as an adventure in its own right it is the superb animation which will be the more immediate attraction of what is a very fine game.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: quite easy
Graphics: scrolling graphics with character animation
Presentation: good
Input facility: allows sentences. Vocabulary small and a little unorthodox
Response: reasonable, scrolling graphics appear a bit slow when in a hurry
General rating: good, I liked it a lot.

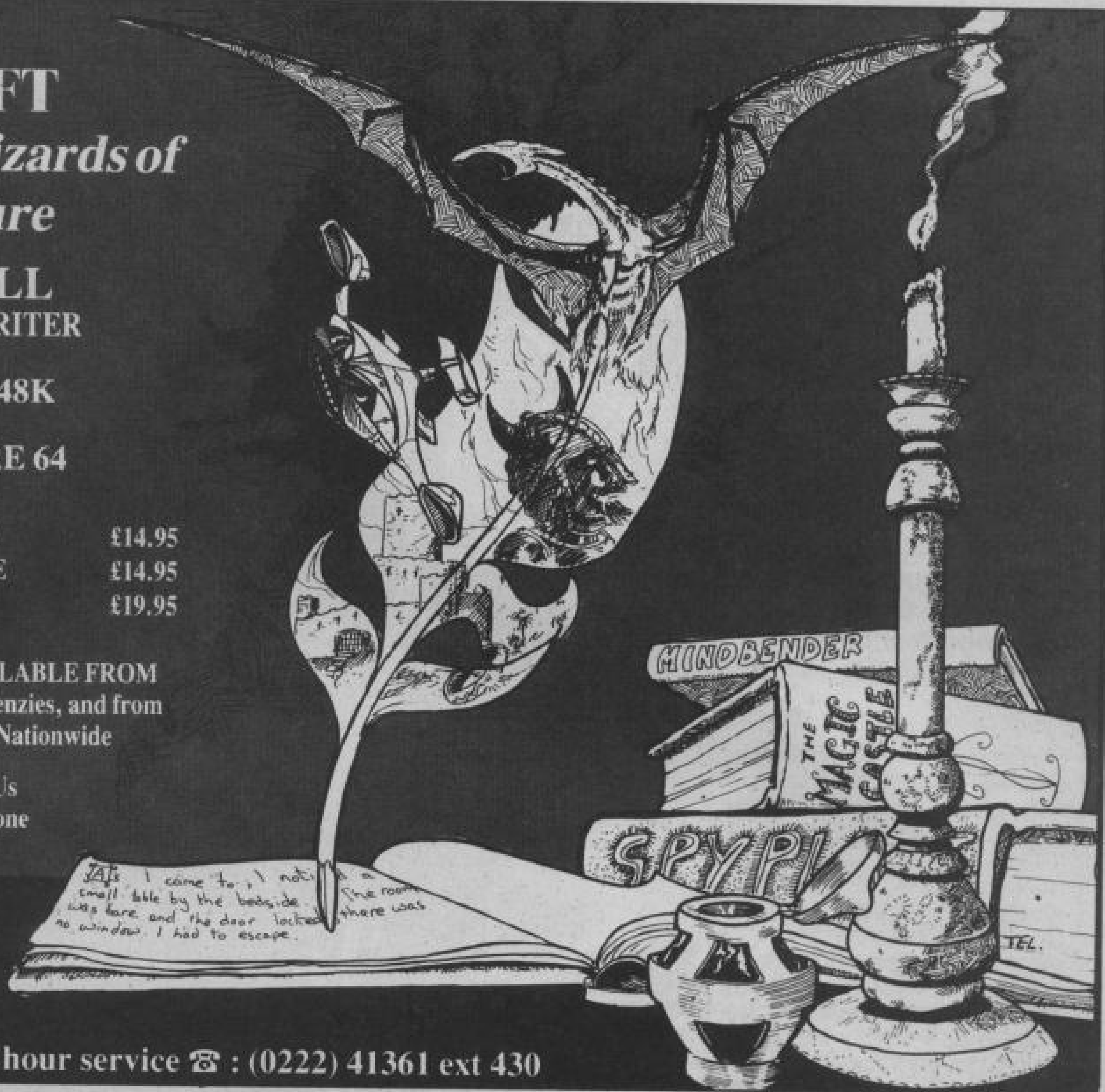
Atmosphere	8
Vocabulary	5
Logic	8
Debugging	10
Overall value	8



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The Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle

Producer: **Adventure International**
Memory required: **48**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Scott Adams**



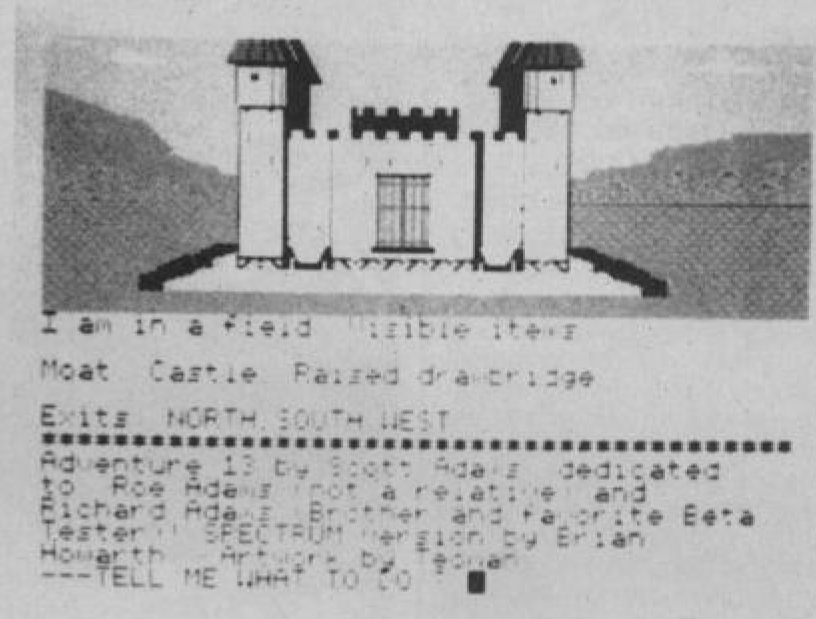
Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle is adventure 13 by Scott Adams, marketed by Adventure International. It follows in the footsteps of *The Hulk* featuring superlative graphics at every scene.

Solon the Master Wizard and owner of the Secret Coat long ago lost the 13 stars of Power. The evil Vileroth, believing the stars to be the only source of Solon's power, acquired these magical prizes when in fact it was the cloak that controlled the stars. Unable to master the magical stars, Vileroth's strength slipped away leaving him with no option but to conceal the Stars of Power within Claymorgue Castle so no one else could possess them. You are Beanwick, Solon's faithful young apprentice, and your task is to retrieve the 13 stars armed with a few spells and with a few more to be found in the castle, but the problem is, how do you use them?

The first location is a super graphic showing fine detail of the turrets and battlements comprising a compact, but nonetheless imposing, fortress. If I were to describe a picture of a moat, surrounding a castle with a drawbridge, being a highly skilled and cynical explorer, you will immediately imagine a tidy graphic of a drawbridge which is, of course, raised. If you should ever meet an adventure where a drawbridge is not raised, knowing the deviousness of many adventure authors, I would tread warily. This first problem is tackled, like so many in the adventure, by making use of the magic bestowed upon you from the start or to be found in the various nooks and crannies along the way.

Getting the drawbridge down (the noun needs the first five letters DRAWB), you look up to see it down in the picture – a nice touch. Moving east onto the drawbridge you are met with a curious sight where you are contemplating your feet upon the bridge overlooking the moat, but it would be wise to resist the temptation to take the plunge as it may just harbour one of those nasty sleeping moat monsters. On the east side of the drawbridge you see a lever set in the western wall and you'd need to be half-baked or inappropriately impulsive to fail to appreciate the consequences of pulling it. Better to move further east into the interior of the castle and a courtyard with a highly decorative fountain set at its middle. Enter the magic fountain now and it could signal your first meeting with the horrific and very graphic depiction of a sneering skull which makes you shudder the first time you see it. If instead you content yourself for the time being with collecting the goodies here, you'll notice that the program follows what is fast becoming a trend. The fact that you have gained an object is not acknowledged as such. The only indication that you have indeed picked up an object is that object's removal





from the list of visible items, this coupled with the knowledge that had you failed to pick up an object a report would draw your attention to your lack of success.

By this stage you will have already worked out the use of one spell (at the drawbridge), now let's look at another two. Well, Lycanthorpe in psychiatry is a person who believes that he is a wolf, so what use the Lycanthorpe spell is I'll leave you to decide. As for the Yoho spell it sounds like yoyo and yoyos spring back to your hand when spun. Indeed, the Yoho spell takes you back to the first location; unfortunately, if you were dying on using it, you'll still die at or near the first scene. Also, surprisingly, you are told the Yoho spell works on the second occasion of its use, but on the second attempt nothing seems to happen.

Further east you meet one of those situations which you just know will become a classic since it is both devious and difficult. In the ballroom is a giant chandelier secured to a wall by way of a rope. You discover the deviousness of the problem if you attempt the obvious, leading to an annoyingly obvious conclusion. The assumption is you'd be stupid enough to stand under the chandelier while untying it! Should you have had the foresight to fetch the crate from the kitchen you would be spared, presumably because the chandelier has less of a distance to fall before crashing onto your head. Incidentally, GET OFF will not see you off the chandelier, but GO BALLROOM will, rather strange when the former does work when getting off the crate.

I wonder if this game has enough to keep me interested until the seventh or eighth star, never mind the thirteenth, since clearly so much effort for this adventure has been invested in producing the ultimate graphics. The vocabulary is friendly, though restricted to verb/noun couplings, with constructions such as GO (FOUNTAIN) and ENTER (COURTYARD) both accepted, and it is reasonably easy to get around until the problems become more pedantic and intractable.

Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle is an offering from a highly regarded force in adventure publishing, Scott Adam's Adventure International. Commercially it is as slick, polished and viably marketed as only American software can be. Superb graphics and a racy response give the game the edge. However, you can't help but get the feeling that beneath the razzmatazz the plot is a shade dull and uninspiring. As was said during a hamburger commercial and the US Presidential Election, where's the meat?

COMMENTS

Difficulty: very difficult
Graphics: excellent and very fast
Presentation: well laid out
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: very fast
General rating: good

Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	8
Logic	7
Debugging	10
Overall value	7



EUREKA!

Producer: **Domark**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£14.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Ian Livingstone**



Eureka! is a game that follows in the footsteps of some local authorities, large American States and daily newspapers in bringing the lottery into the lives of the many so that they may have a crack at that all-too-elusive prize. The unliklihood of winning the proze is made up in part by its sheer size. In this case Domark have judged £25, 000 to be an ample sum to tempt enough punters to pay the game's way. If no one wins the prize by 31st December 1985, Domark will share out the prize equally. One can't help thinking up an analogy with British Telecom Shares. And here lies the rub; I can't really judge the issue because it all depends upon the view you take on a game where the intellectual unravelling of a string of riddles and puzzles may gain you a considerable sum of money, much like a Financial Editor of a newspaper can only draw your attention to shares that may prove a sound investment – whether they are a sound investment depends on how the market fares.

The game comes in a large box containing five adventures on the one tape and a thin, but lavish, booklet. Of the five adventures, the first four can be played in any order, the fifth only on giving the correct answer to a series of questions on the previous four. Each of the adventures contains clues to the mystery code. The answers to the riddels in the accompanying booklet lie within the programs, and you decipher the code into a UK telephone number using chapter six in the booklet. You ring the number and if you can correctly answer the question by the closing date you win the prize. A hotline will tell you whether the prize has gone already.

The Temporal Talisman, an ancient artifact found on the Moon by the Apollo XVII mission, shattered into many pieces when subjected tio the intense beams of the SHIVA Fusion Project lasers. A Dr. Majid has convinced NASA that he knows where the missing pieces are to be found. Each piece was catapulted onto Time and has been traced thus:- one in Prehistoric Europe, Roman Italy, Arthurian Britain, Wartime Germany and the Modern Caribbean. An experimental device, The Chonetran, will send you back in time to retrieve the pieces.

A short arcade game precedes each adventure and must be attempted as it helps to increase your vigour in the adventure if you score over 25, 000 points (a magic number for this game)! Every 500 points beyond this gives you one extra vigour point up to a maximum of 100 points. An automatic vigour level of 50 can be taken over to the adventure but only on finishing the arcade game. The object of the arcade game is to collect the flashing objects and dropping them by pressing the fire button. Each time this is done a flashing exit sign appears on the screen. Theoretically you can choose to leave or stay on to score more points but in practice, due to the sluggish response, pressing the fire button just a fraction too long sees you stay for another round whether you wanted to or not. Considering how mind-stupefyingly boring this game is this can make you see red. You begin to think that you really have to work for the £25, 000 – no playing around here.

On to the adventure itself. Since I could load Arthurian Britain straight away I started with this followed by Roman Italy. I say 'could load' because if you should find any difficulty, like myself, in loading any part you could well be in trouble. All five games are contained on the one cassette and the search, rewind and fast forward when trying to locate the start of a section may result in a damaged tape. Domark may worry at the possibility of many tapes being returned.

There is no save facility underlining the fact that this product sees itself as little more than a competition with none of the usuual courtesies afforded adventurers. This omission is compounded by the irritation involved in having to start at the beginning when killed whereupon a 35 second wait is necessary before recommencing. The Roman Italy section is made difficult by the use of Latin throughout but in another part one problem is a giveaway to Star Trek fans (can you believe it – I'm still watching the repeats of the repats of the. . .) A hollow log, flint, diamonds, sulphur, saltpetre and coal are indelibly linked in the minds of the space adventure's fans.

Eureka! offers a prize of £25, 000 to the person tenacious and skilled enough to solve this puzzle. The game does feature graphics but these vary considerably in quality from the quite good, through passable to downright expedient, eg. using mirror images to complete the picture. If you never see any part of the vast sum on offer I think it unlikely you would return to the game for its own sake.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: very difficult
Graphics: on every location but are rather poor
Presentation: background changes colour abruptly and exits and objects are not usually given
Input facility: good
Response: reasonably fast
Special features: arcade game at start, real time, 5 separate adventures, £25, 000 prize
General rating: should be good value but has several annoying features like lack of SAVE facility.

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	7
Debugging	10
Overall value	7

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Each glass has a RUNIC inscription around its base which you must read and understand. Only saying these words will lift that part of the spell. To protect the hour glasses Zendos has placed them in 12 separate rooms in his castle, each room linked to a different exterior gateway by a devious route.

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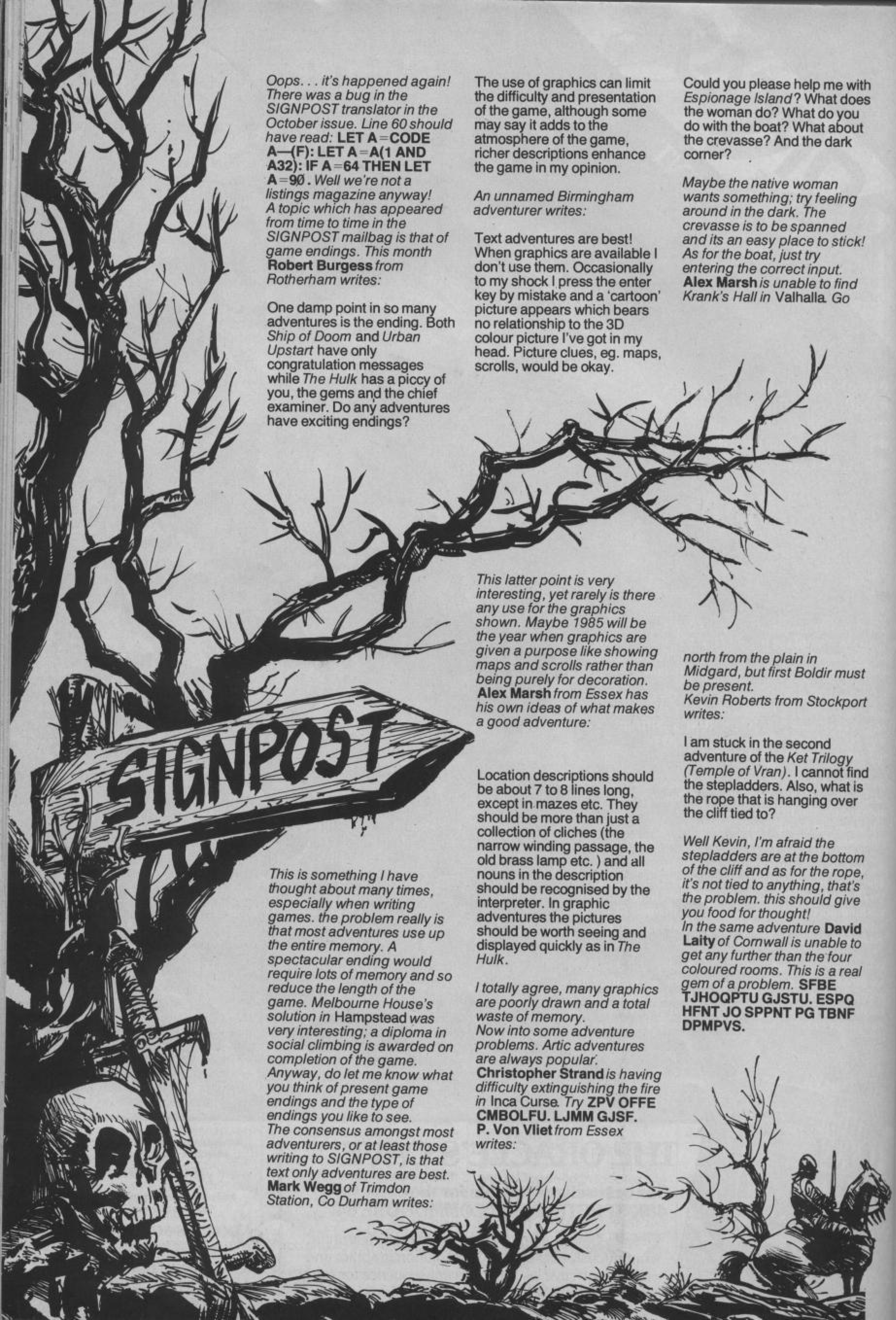
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Oops. . . it's happened again! There was a bug in the SIGNPOST translator in the October issue. Line 60 should have read: **LET A=CODE A—(F): LET A=A(1 AND A32): IF A=64 THEN LET A=9Ø.** *Well we're not a listings magazine anyway!*
A topic which has appeared from time to time in the SIGNPOST mailbag is that of game endings. This month **Robert Burgess** *from Rotherham writes:*

One damp point in so many adventures is the ending. Both *Ship of Doom* and *Urban Upstart* have only congratulation messages while *The Hulk* has a piccy of you, the gems and the chief examiner. Do any adventures have exciting endings?

This is something I have thought about many times, especially when writing games. the problem really is that most adventures use up the entire memory. A spectacular ending would require lots of memory and so reduce the length of the game. Melbourne House's solution in Hampstead *was very interesting; a diploma in social climbing is awarded on completion of the game. Anyway, do let me know what you think of present game endings and the type of endings you like to see.*
The consensus amongst most adventurers, or at least those writing to SIGNPOST, is that text only adventures are best. **Mark Wegg** *of Trimdon Station, Co Durham writes:*

The use of graphics can limit the difficulty and presentation of the game, although some may say it adds to the atmosphere of the game, richer descriptions enhance the game in my opinion.

An unnamed Birmingham adventurer writes:

Text adventures are best! When graphics are available I don't use them. Occasionally to my shock I press the enter key by mistake and a 'cartoon' picture appears which bears no relationship to the 3D colour picture I've got in my head. Picture clues, eg. maps, scrolls, would be okay.

This latter point is very interesting, yet rarely is there any use for the graphics shown. Maybe 1985 will be the year when graphics are given a purpose like showing maps and scrolls rather than being purely for decoration.
Alex Marsh *from Essex has his own ideas of what makes a good adventure:*

Location descriptions should be about 7 to 8 lines long, except in mazes etc. They should be more than just a collection of cliches (the narrow winding passage, the old brass lamp etc.) and all nouns in the description should be recognised by the interpreter. In graphic adventures the pictures should be worth seeing and displayed quickly as in *The Hulk*.

I totally agree, many graphics are poorly drawn and a total waste of memory.
Now into some adventure problems. Artic adventures are always popular.
Christopher Strand *is having difficulty extinguishing the fire in* Inca Curse. *Try* **ZPV OFFE CMBOLFU. LJMM GJSF.**
P. Von Vliet *from Essex writes:*

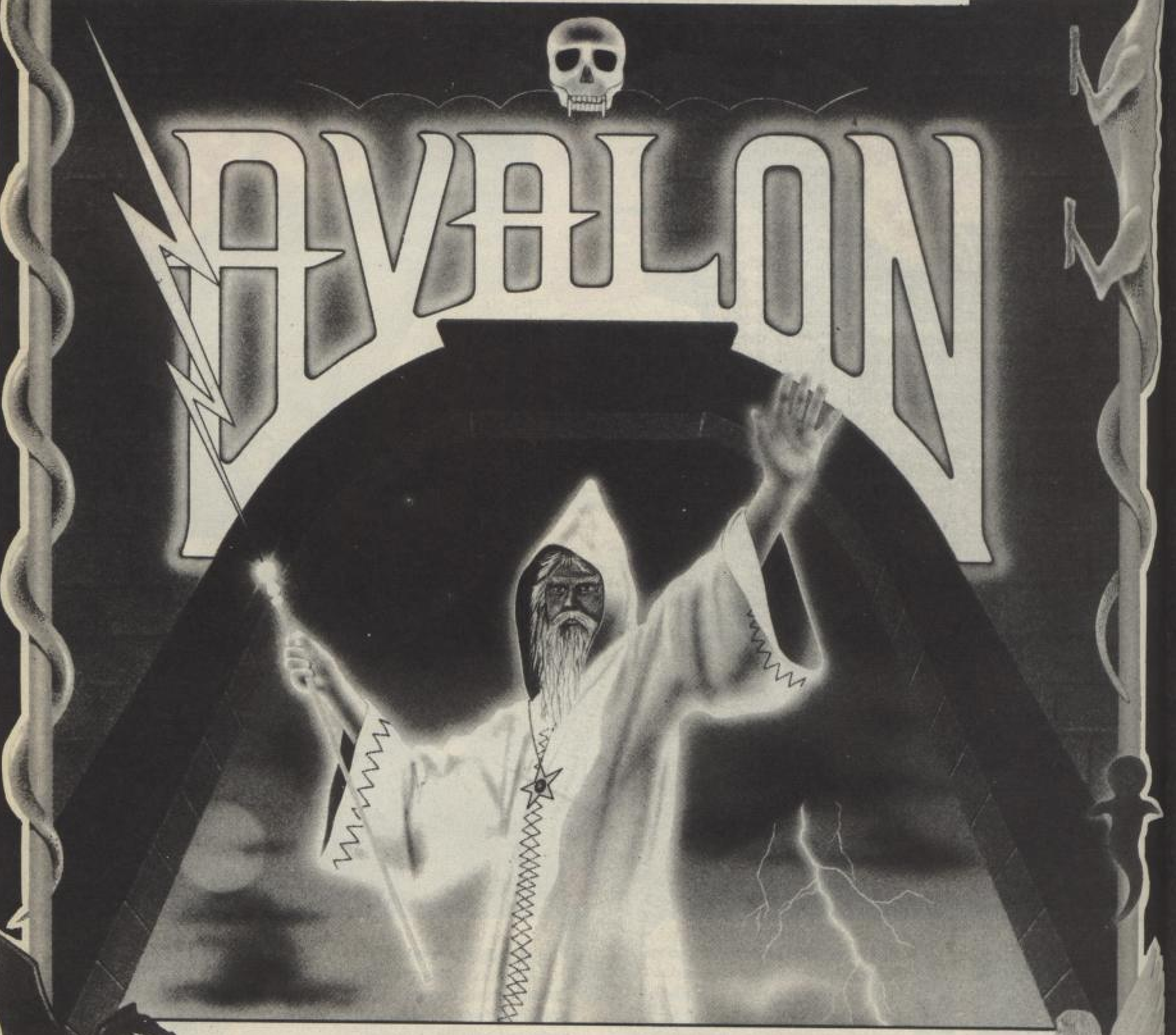
Could you please help me with *Espionage Island*? What does the woman do? What do you do with the boat? What about the crevasse? And the dark corner?

Maybe the native woman wants something; try feeling around in the dark. The crevasse is to be spanned and its an easy place to stick! As for the boat, just try entering the correct input.
Alex Marsh *is unable to find Krank's Hall in* Valhalla. *Go north from the plain in Midgard, but first Boldir must be present.*
Kevin Roberts from Stockport writes:

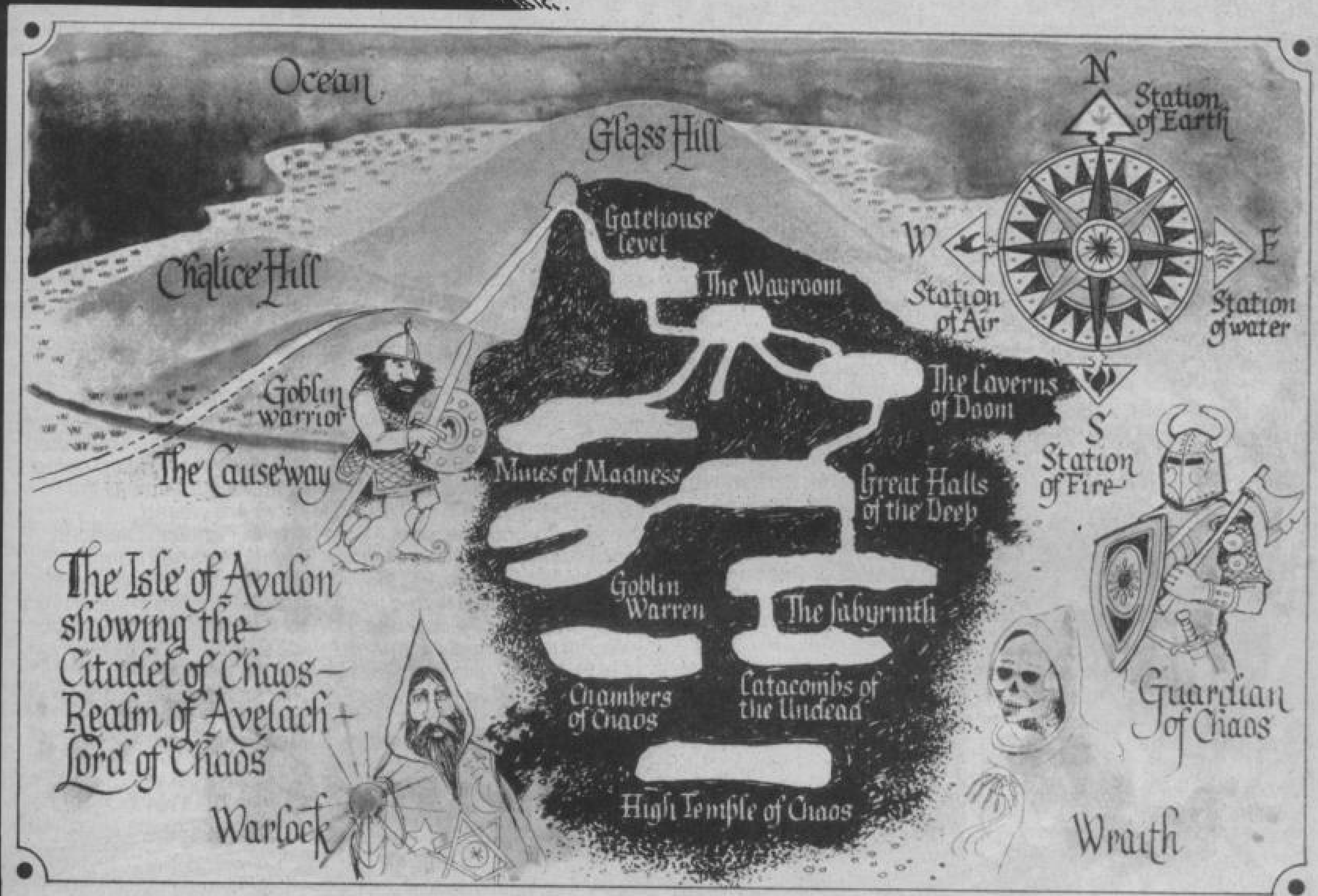
I am stuck in the second adventure of the *Ket Trilogy (Temple of Vran)*. I cannot find the stepladders. Also, what is the rope that is hanging over the cliff tied to?

Well Kevin, I'm afraid the stepladders are at the bottom of the cliff and as for the rope, it's not tied to anything, that's the problem. this should give you food for thought!
In the same adventure **David Laity** *of Cornwall is unable to get any further than the four coloured rooms. This is a real gem of a problem.* **SFBE TJHOQPTU GJSTU. ESPQ HFNT JO SPPNT PG TBNF DPMPVS.**

THE COMPETITION FOR



Your name could be immortalised for evermore if you are lucky enough to be the winner of this competition. *HEWSON CONSULTANTS*, in association with *CRASH*, are offering as first prize a unique presentation certificate on parchment paper done in old-style script; plus the winning entry will be specially mounted on a block. The winner and fifty runners-up will win the follow-up to The Legend of Avalon which is called *The Dragon Torc of Avalon* and is due for release early next year.



Crash Competition

What you have to do is send in an illustrated map from *Avalon* detailing one particular level of the game. It can be any level you like, the choice is yours. This competition is not concerned with playing ability – the judges will be looking for good and original presentation as well as accuracy of locations, detail of objects, weapons and hazards and anything else you can think of which will enhance your entry. Don't forget the sense of period and mystery that exists in the game – it's all part of the atmosphere!

Because the winning entry will be specially mounted by Hewson Consultants, it is important that your entry does not exceed dimensions of 60cm x 80cm, although it can be smaller if you like. CRASH will pick the overall winner and the fifty runners-up.

Send your entries to: **AVALON, COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than first post **January 18 1985**.



Many adventurers have been unable to open the chest in Tylon's Castle in Kentilla. *A clue; the key is hidden in Tylon's bedroom, read the location description carefully. In the same game I'm sorry to have to tell* **Garith Jenkins** *that Velmista is no cure for the Black Death.*
Urban Upstart; **J. Peacock** *is unable to cross the building site without sinking and being rushed to hospital. Obviously something is missing. Are you suitably dressed?* **XFBS CPPUT.**

In the November issue I asked if anyone knew where to find the Gin in Dennis through the Drinking Glass. *I must thank the many adventurers, too numerous to mention, who wrote in with the solution. To find the Gin simply* **HP UP DVQCPBSE, IJEF, HP UP NBHHJFT EFO, MPPL QPU.**
Darren Gray *of York asks about* Fantasia Diamond:

How do you get down the trapdoor which is not far from the lever? How do you make the orchestra play to get through the music door?

To get through the trapdoor, try an old Hobbit solution! **IJU USBQEPPS XJUI CBUUPO.** *The latter problem is one which I requested help on in the November issue. I found that the characters would either drop the objects I had given them or simply wander away, never to return again to the music room.* **Ian Simmons** *tells me:*

To open the music door in *Fantasia Diamond* you drop the music book on the floor because the conductor is long sighted. Then give the batton to the conductor and the violin to the violinist. Then, making sure they keep there, say 'play music' to conductor.

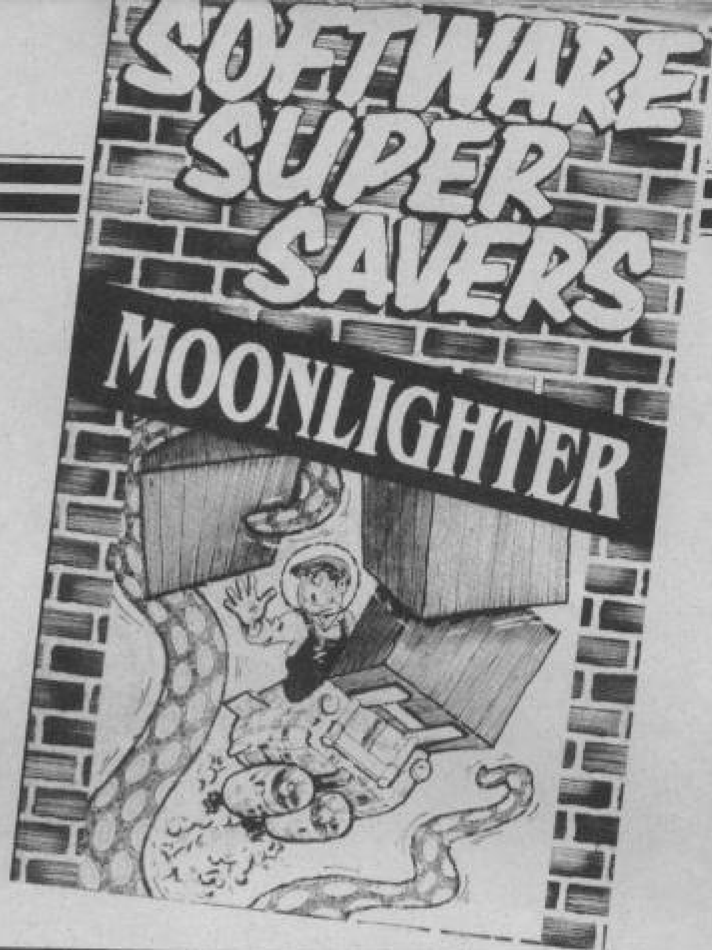
An anonymous explorer from Birmingham tells me not to open the curtains until all the objects have been collected and even then before doing so make sure that all the doors are closed.
Also in Fantasia Diamond, **David Marshall** *from Richmond is unable to get through the Brown door. As a tip, be more polite.* **LOPDL PO EPPS.**

This month's £12 worth of software is won by **Alex Marsh** *of Essex.*



MOON LIGHTER

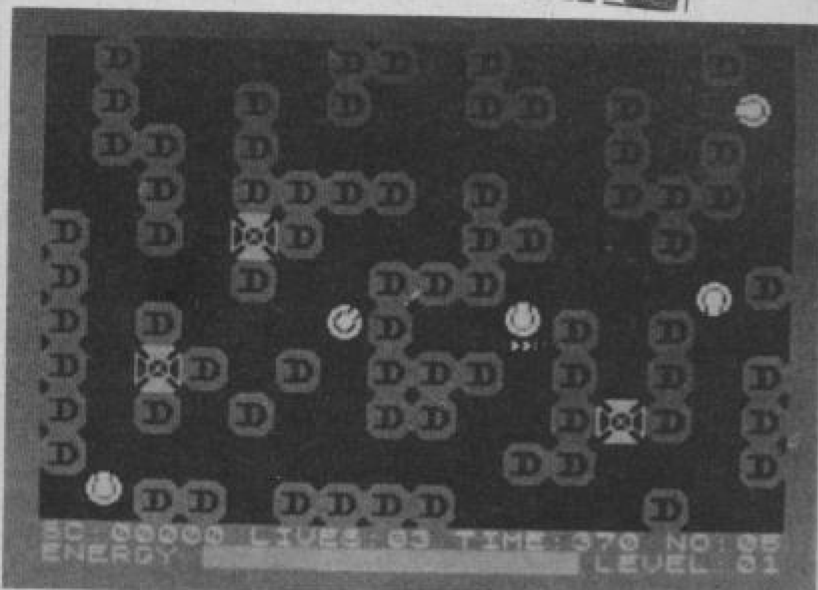
Producer: **Software Super Savers**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **R. Mac Farquhar**



In these hard times you have decided to supplement your meagre income you have taken a night job as watchman at Capital City's Space Terminal cargo warehouse. You have been assigned to the R block (radiation contaminated shipments). Why is the pay for this four times the normal rate? Why is the last man's gear still in his locker? Why did they ask for your next of kin? Still, your buggy should stand up to anything. . .

So say the instructions to this new budget game from a wing of Software Projects. The radiation, of course, has caused creatures in the warehouse to mutate, and you must go around in your 'zappodozer' zappodozing them by shoving the crated goods at them and squashing them before they get you.

From this brief description it is easy to see that what we have here is really a 'Pengo' type game where crates replace ice blocks. Each level is enlivened by the fact that the goods are changed. As each screen starts one of the crates will be flashing and a creature will emerge from it after a second or two. More crates flash as more creatures come to the attack, becoming more intelligent as they go along. Crates may be pushed along or melted (except the yellow ones which may be pushed only). At the base of the screen is an energy bar — there is also a time counter which affects the bonus score.



CRITICISM

● 'I didn't think *Moonlighter* was very playable because the dozer is too sluggish while the nasties are quick. Also the fact that there are quite a few keys does not help very much. The most exciting bit of the game is the 'zippy' noise that occurrs when all the lives are lost!'

● *'Another attempt at an ice age game – 'Pengo'. The screen is laid out on quite a large grid of 'ice' – but in this game crates of 'Dunlot' tennis balls. And it is this load of balls that keep on hanging about trying to get you! The mutated balls seem to be very eager to try and squash you and move very fast in comparison to 'you'. I found on the very first screen that killing off five balls was a nightmare – on the second screen with ten balls after me it seemed impossible. Colour has been used very well in this game, graphics are clear detailed and move well. There are many tunes, all quite jolly and pleasing. At £2.99 this does represent good value for this type of game.'*

● 'The graphics in *Moonlighter* are smooth and quite fast, and although they are actually quite detailed, they don't really appear to be so, which is a bit odd. It's a fairly standard 'Pengo' game and a pretty hard one — perhaps too hard. Good value though for the price. Nothing amazing — just reasonable as a game.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, M to fire, N to push
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive, but melt and push are the wrong way round for comfortable play
Use of colour: above average
Graphics: only average
Sound: good tunes, some nice spot effects
Skill levels: progressive (more jumps, leaps and bounds!)
Lives: 5
Screens:
Special features:
General rating: average game, which represents reasonable value for money.

Use of computer	48%
Graphics	52%
Playability	47%
Getting started	50%
Addictive qualities	36%
Value for money	54%
Overall	48%

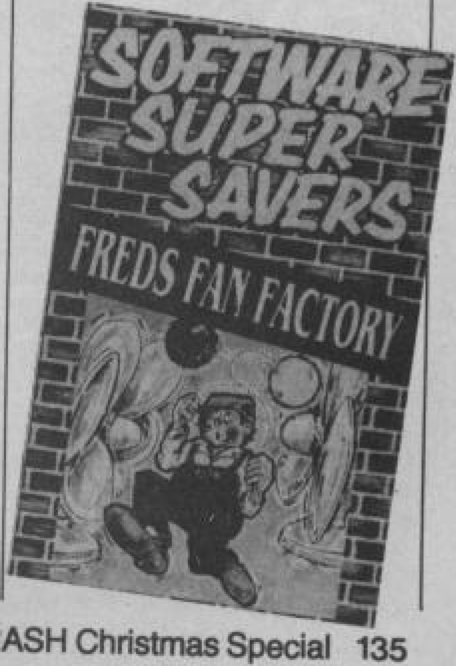
FREDS FAN FACTORY

Producer: **Software Super Savers**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Pat Norris**

Another in the new Software Projects' budget range –Software Super Savers, *Fred's Fan Factory* is an interesting idea. It's a pity nothing could be said about playing the game either on the inlay or on the screen, because although the immediate requirement is pretty obvious, the long term objectives are not.

Fred runs left and right along the bottom of the screen, while above him there are four 'corridors' with ffset holes leading upwards from one to the other. In the roof of the corridors there are sharp green spikes at intervals, and t opposed ends of each corridor there are large electric style fans, magenta fans on the first level, green on the second, blue on the third and yellow on the top. On Fred's level there are eight handles set into the roof in four colours, each handle coresspponding to one of the fans. By dashing from one handle to the other an activating it, Frad can make the appropriate fans work.

From the lowest level at the left, a alloon man appears, wafting down the corridor until he reaches the first upward hole. The balloon then rises and will burst ona spike unless Fred can reach the right fan and waft the balloon safely on down the

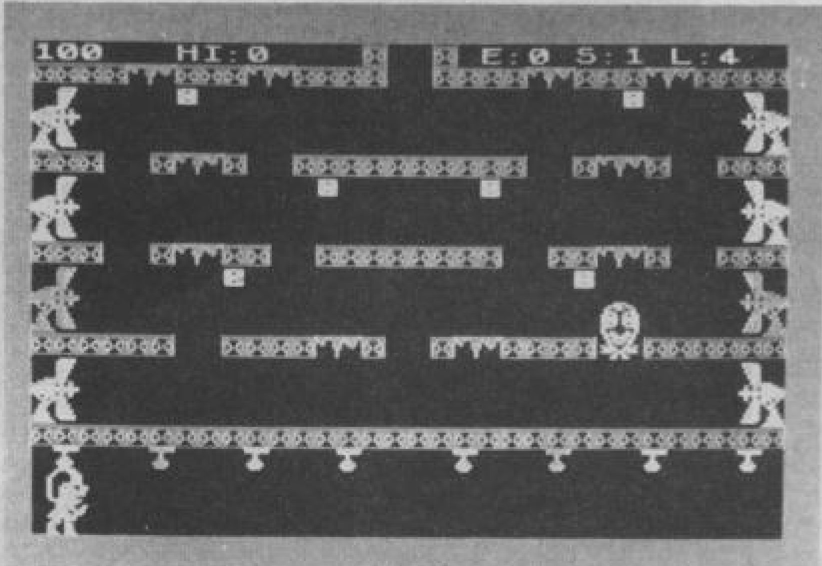


corridor. By judicious use of alternating fans, it is possible to make the balloons waft from left to right, picking up yellow blocks set on the roofs here and there. As soon as the first balloon is under way another will emerge from the right and so on. The object is to collect all the yellow blocks before running out of balloon men.

CRITICISM

● *'Fred's Fan Factory* is a rather orginal game to say the least, th graphics are good enough to match the game. This game is challenging and strategic in an 'arcade' sort of way. I enjoyed it! I also found it a little difficult because the type of skill required is an ability to concentrate on several things at once, rather like juggling. No easy task!'

● *'The object is to guide balloons through a factory using the fans on either side. At first the game is confusing because you are not told what to do.*



The keys are awkwardly placed and the game depends heavily on your having a colour TV.'

● *'Fred's Fan Factory* would have been a really good game if it had been a bit more playable. The idea is novel but there are two serious failings; the first isthat the level of difficulty has been twisted up just that bit too much to make the game enjoyable to play, and the second is that it is very hard to position Fred properly to activate a fan switch. This just makes te level of frustration too high to continue being bothered with the game. A pity, because the idea is good and the sort of skill needed is interesting.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/P left/right, M for fan control
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: with only three keys it would have been better to have them positioned closer together
Use of colour: good
Graphics: quite good although pretty simple
Sound: only the balloon bursting effect
Skill levels:
Lives: 6 balloon men
Screens:
Special features:
General rating: mixed feelings from reviewers ranging from waste of money to above average.

Use of computer	58%
Graphics	48%
Playability	43%
Getting started	25%
Addictive qualities	38%
Value for money	51%
Overall	44%

RACING PREDICTIONS

Producer: **Buffer Micro**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**

Chris 'The Tipster' Passey takes a look at a program to help you win lots of money on the gee-gees...

I've just about lost count of the number of times that people have asked if my computer will 'pick horses'. Well here's a program that claims to do just that.

The program makes its predictions from SPEED FIGURE DATA (SFD), published by *Sporting Life*. Basically, this is what the required inputs are: First enter the name of the course and the going, ie. Soft, Hard etc. The courses are graded which is significant as different grades attract different classes of horse. Next, the distance in furlongs is entered. After this each horse running is entered with its age, weight and SFD. The Speed Figure Data is information about the horse's best performance in the current season, taking into account the course, ground conditions and distance behind the winner. An example of SFD is shown below:

Horse's name
Crash Smash

speed figure
97

course (eg. Ludlow)
LUD

distance
25f

going, eg. Good
G

date (not input)
Dec 10

And before anyone says anything – yes, there is a race course at Ludlow as all serious punters know!

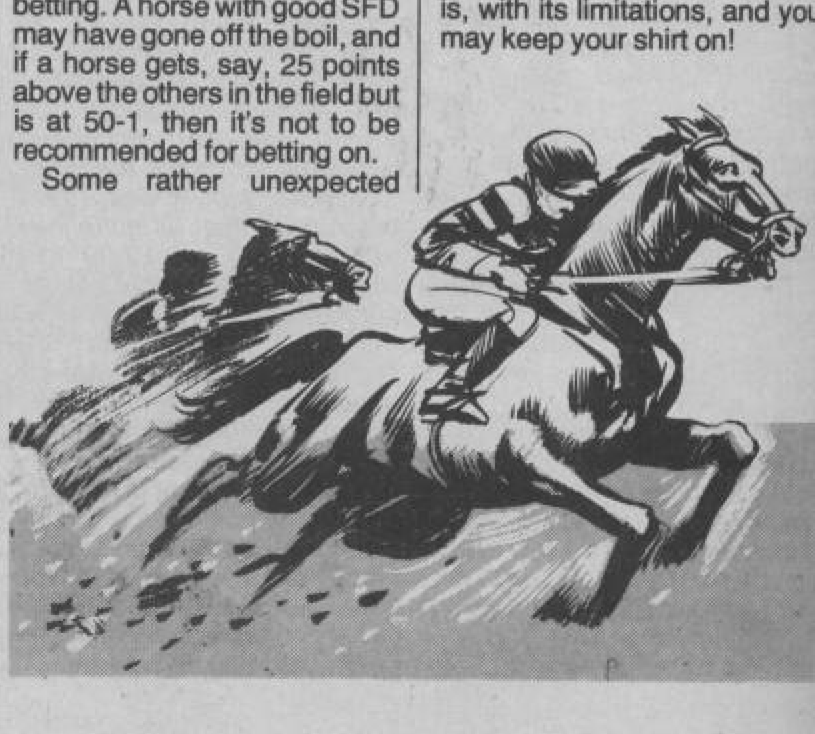
After all the information has been entered, the program sorts the list. It then produces a list, with numbers alongside the entries representing a horse's chance of winning. Typical values would be between 1 and 300. I tried quite a few races, but I could only use the 'flat' program because at the time of reviewing, the National Hunt (jumps) season was not sufficiently established to give any reasonably reliable SFD.

I personally feel that speed in general has a greater bearing on the flat because compared to NH, it is more of a sprint. NH, which is over longer distances, may have any sort of pace until the last few furlongs.

Enough digressions, back to the results. On *average* I found that when correctly interpreted, the results were rather useful. Interpretation *is* required because the program does not take into account recent positions (form) or the betting. A horse with good SFD may have gone off the boil, and if a horse gets, say, 25 points above the others in the field but is at 50-1, then it's not to be recommended for betting on.

Some rather unexpected outcomes and ratings lead me to doubt the program's abilities, but on average over quite a few races the horses in the highest finishing positions did have significantly higher ratings given.

The system has its limitations, but if used sensibly as an aid to a decision, is useful. Consider the ratings as another factor when picking a horse. This program (or any other) is not able to pick winners like magic. And it's worth remembering that horse racing is hardly logical. Accept *Racing Predictions* for what it is, with its limitations, and you may keep your shirt on!





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Our last BUG-BYTE competition for *Rapscallion*, proved to be one of the most popular we have ever run and no doubt its follow up will exceed expectations as well. *Turmoil* is a classic platform game with some very novel innovations which make it fun to play. As its title indicates, a frenzied pace is set up as you collect oil and avoid slipping over in the stuff! Oil is the central feature along with the lively, leaping protagonists who pursue you with vengeance on their minds. *Turmoil* makes a startling contrast to BUG- BYTE's other co-release, *Kung-Fu*, where the violence is contained within the rigid and formalised structure of the ancient, oriental martial art. Both *Kung-Fu* and *Turmoil* retail at £6.95, but BUG- BYTE and CRASH offer you the chance to win a copy of *Turmoil* absolutely free in return for answering a few simple questions!



TURMOIL IN THE GARAGE!!

A CHANCE TO WIN THE HIT GAME FROM BUG-BYTE!!

A CRASH Smash of last month, BUG-BYTE's *Turmoil* is an unusual game of platform jumping skill with loads of screens. Here's a chance for 100 lucky readers to win the game!



To have a chance of winning a copy of BUG-BYTE's *Turmoil*, all you have to do is answer the questions below. We reviewed *Turmoil* in last month's CRASH (November), where it received a CRASH Smash rating, so you should have no problem getting everything right!



The first 100 correct entries pulled from the (rapidly wearing out) bag will each receive a copy of *TURMOIL*. Send your answers on a postcard please (or the outside of a sealed envelope) to: TURMOIL COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB to arrive no later than the first post on January 18

THE QUESTIONS

1. How many screens are there in *Turmoil*?
2. Who do 'you' play in *Turmoil*?
3. What are the 'nasties'?



4. *Turmoil* has 'a very novel difference.' What is it?
5. What vehicle do you start off with in the garage?
6. Count up how many times the word 'Turmoil' appears in the text of last month's review (ignore the main top heading and any captions). Multiply the result by the Overall rating and divide the answer by the retail price. Give your answer to the nearest two decimal places.





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UGH! Here it is, as promised, one wall to wall VALLEY OF SLIME, a gooey squelch full of hi-scoring creeps and undoubted POKE users. But honesty is the true measure of a good man, and all who dare enter here had better be telling the truth according to Lloyd Mangram or you'll be banished hence and left to wander the desolate plains with only a PCG and C&VG Hall of Fame for company. Anyway, enough of the cassette blurb and on with the action. . .

Wild West Hero 118, 010
D. T's Decathlon overall 642, 124
Underwurlde 101, 541 at 28
Turmoil 3, 150 Point 1
Darkstar 5, 100
Dale Perry (15), Kettering, Northants

Underwurlde completed, 13 November 7pm
Stephen Hogan (14), Wollaton, Nottingham

Underwurlde completed on 11th go, 31, 000 at 12
Sabre Wulf 56, 760 at 61
Full Throttle 1st on all tracks
Monty Mole 17th screen, 2, 000 odd
Hunchback 1, 000, 000 odd, Esmerelda rescued 4 times
S. Murphy, Harrow Wealdstone, Middx

Eddie Kidd Jump Chaqllenge 14 cars cleared, score 54
Jonathon Worely & Kevin Wells, Havant, Hants

Sabre Wulf 1, 106, 745 at 97, done in 3 hours 18 minutes.
Andrew Dunbar, Buckley, Clwyd, N. Wales

That is a pretty amazing hi-score I must say, and Andrew offers a sort of proof.
LM

Chuckie Egg 238, 630 on L22
Amanda Joyes (10), Isleworth, Middx

Chequered Flag Cambridge Ring 56.12
Pssst 86, 420
Sabre Wulf 174, 280 at 90
Zzoom 684, 400
Spectipede 48, 580
Atic Atac 145, 355 50mins at 100
Jetpac 2, 345, 000. I can assure you these are all correct!
M. Edwards, Bishops Stortford, Herts

Dear Lloyd, I am writing to you hoping to get my hi-score published. But I know that I won't, but if I do here it is, 3, 589, 300. You don't believe me, I find it hard as well, it was just a lucky streak, but I did it.
Ivan Wooll, Merrion, Dyfed, Wales

Well that's really tremendous, Ivan, and of course I believe you. Congratulations! What was the game by the way?
LM

Moon Alert 14, 760
Black Hawk 51, 418 on L4
Blade Alley 48, 786 on L14 (Admiral)
Full Throttle 1st at Silverstone by 25 seconds
Andrew Jones, South Glamorgan, Wales

Darkstar 4, 760 after 1hr 40
Alex Dady (14), London, print out supplied

Legend of Avalon Chief Lore Seeker
Simon Condliffe, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear

D. T's Decathlon 100m 9.18, Long Jump 10.29, Discus 75.72, High Jump 2.39, 400m 28.11, 110m Hurdles 9.88, Pole Vaul 4.90, Shot Put 29.72, Javelin 127.46, 1500m 258; Day 1 score 299, 277; Day 2 score 530, 200
Mark Bishop, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

D. T's Decathlon 100m 9.22, Long Jump 9.81, Shot Put 28.76, High Jump 2.42, 400m 32.56, 110m Hurdles 12.44, Pole Vault 5.05, Discus 75.90, Javelin 90.59
Lords of Midnight completed
Hobbit completed
Beach-Head completed
Dangermouse completed 3 times in one go
JSW completed
Night Gunner Mission 11
Matchpoint computer beaten, semi-final
Cavelon completed
Stop the Express stopped
Sports hero 100m 10.08, Long Jump 8.75, 110m Hurdles 13.29, Pole Vault 5.50
Craig Jack(15), Swindon, Wilts.

Chuckie Egg 353, 940 on L31
Moon Alert 22, 460 on Letter Q
Sabre Wulf 340, 480 at 98
Pheenix 48, 720
Lunar Jetman 130, 030 on L9
Fred Level 5
Tranz-Am 8 cups
Fighter Pilot 3 planes shot down
Manic Miner 231, 390
completed the following: **Lords of Midnight, Urban Upstart, Planet of death, Velnor's Lair, Ant Attack, Mined-Out, Alchemist, Admiral Graf Spee, Time Gate, Black Crystal**
Football Manager finished top of all divisions and won the FA Cup in successive seasons. All scores done without a joystick.
David (I'm no cheat)Bovill, Gwynedd, N. Wales

Full Throttle San Marino 1st 14:58, Yugoslavia 1st 13:52, Italy 1st 10:03, Donnington 1st 42:18
Rod Forster, Rosyth, Dunfermline, Fife.

D. T's Decathlon 100m 9.96, Long Jump 10.26, Shot Putt 32.46, High Jump 2.45, 400m 36.32, total 129, 077: 110m Hurdles 11.14, Pole vault 5.04, Discus 75.90, javelin 132.70, 1500m 268.05, total 531, 779
Chequered Flag Cambridge Ring 0.51:06
Fighter Pilot my dad shot down so many planes we lost count. He's a pilot flying RAF Tornados.
Paul (13), South Wootton, Kings Lynn, Norfolk

Great – so where's his score on TLL?
LM

D. T's Decathlon 100m 9.32, Long Jump 11.40, Shot Putt 34.00, High Jump 3.36, 400m 29.00, score 6th level 175, 303. I do not submit my Day 2 scores since side two doesn't load. I would like to point out that if Charles Pilcher managed to get 297, 792 he would have made it onto level 10. Hid High Jump score, however, would not qualify from level 3.
Paul (Truthfully) Avetoom(15), Ealing, London W5

Moon Alert 156, 160 onto screen 2
Tranz-Am 33 cups
Harrier Attack 51, 010 skill 5
Chuckie egg 326, 160
TLL 21, 855
Full Throttle 1st on every track within 3 laps
Jetpac 310, 350
Ant Attack 10 rescued, 20, 930
D. T's Decathlon Pole Vault 5.03, Javelin 131.40, 100m 9.84, Shot Putt 32.01

John O'Halloran(15), Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwicks.

Atic Atac 87
Zzoom 52, 730 and 139 refugess
The Hobbit 72.5
Psst 31, 000 odd
Gavin White(13), Ferryhill, Co Durham

Sabre Wulf 327, 535 at 100
Atic Atac 67, 495 with 97
Ant Attack 48, 013 completed
Timegate completed at level 5
Lords of Midnight completed both ways
Lunar Jetman 69, 400
Scrabble completed level 4
Jet set Willy completed
Trashman 8, 593
Deathchase 103, 355
Orc Attack 99, 400
Nicky Hartley, Ossett, W. Yorks

Atic Atac completed in 45
The Guardian 154, 720
Firebirds 129, 125 Wave 49
Gridrunner 202, 182

Rob Holmes, Wirksworth, Derbyshire

Pyramid 139, 765 L15
Stop The Express completed
Pi-Balled 1, 773 on L11
Moonbuggy 14, 200 on L6
Snowman 9, 780 on L8
Cookie 4, 225 on L5
Zzoom 40, 810 on L6
Pssst 33, 748 on L7
Arcadia 2, 540 on L15
Horace Goes Skiing 27, 000
Monty Mole L2 sheet 5
Carl Mouter, South Shields, Tyne & Wear

D. T's Decathlon I must start by saying all the scores are genuine, I made my father get out of his chair to see them for proof. If you don't believe me you can phone him up. 100m 8.92 (must be the fastest time, is there a prize?) Long Jump 10.62, Shot Putt 27, 02, High Jump 2.38, 400m 29.68, score 201, 913: 110m Hurdles 11.75, Pole Vault 5.01, Discus 75.90, Javelin 114.87, 1500m 4.37:00, final score 373, 287
Sam Groves(14), Charsfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk

I think I'll let sleeping dads lie, you sound like an honest person, Sam (!)
LM



Hunchback 4, 688, 700
This is an honest score!
Jason Scotcher, Chingford, London E4

Pyjamarama completed in 91 and 4, 382 paces
Simon 'Wally' Watkinson (13), Bishop Auckland, Co Durham

Pyjamarama completed in 89 and 5, 329 paces
M. Burgess (11), Stocksfield, Northumberland

Trashman 22, 132
Football Manager 74
Monty Mole 2, 058
Frank N. Stein 146
Stagecoach 180, 106
Hunchback 90, 000
Pyjamarama 60
Steven jarman, Newtown, Powys

Zzoom 1, 380, 760 odd
Night Gunner Mission 24
Combat Zone 55, 000
These are all honest scores!
R. Hogg, Penllergaer, Swansea



Well we could go on, but my fingers would wear out, and the art department would scream at me for using up too much space and ruining the look of it all. Remember to keep sending in your photos, so everyone knows who to hate. Next, the Playing Tips.

PLAYING TIPS

Due to an expanded Hall of Slime and Robin Candy's POKEs Corner *(C'mon, LM, get on with it -RC)* – ahem, which follows, this month's Playing Tips have become a bit sandwiched! The games which seem to be on most people's minds are Pyjamarama, Avalon, Decathlon and, not surprisingly the two new Ultimate games, although at the time of writing, it's still rather early days. So, here we go. . .

We'll kick off with a quickie about Underwurlde*which just arrived from* **Simon G. Roberts** *(14) of St. Asaph, Clwyd, North Wales, who cheerfully says:*

To get through the impassable gargoyles, land on a gem. This begins a countdown, for the length of which you gain invincibility. To get rid of the beetle, collect the sabre (level 17), and throw daggers at it.

We've also had a tip or two in about Knight Lore *and these from the mysterious sounding* **Micahel Y** *from Childwall, Liverpool, accord with things we noticed in reviewing the game:*

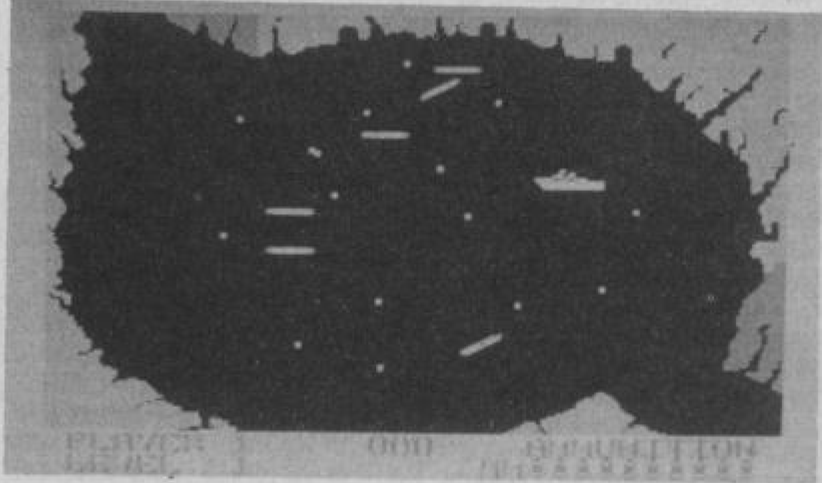
When you press the jump button, sabreman will jump further if the button is kept down while he jumps. This is useful for screens where he has to leap long gaps. Another useful tip is to place an object next to a high wall and when you jump, press down the pick up button at exactly the same time. This way you can get over a wall without losing an object. The cauldron will only tell you what to put in next if it is daytime, and indeed, if it is night time and you are werewulf, the shape will come towards you and kill you. On certain screens when a bouncing ball has to be avoided you should pass through while you are sabreman otherwise the ball will attack.

Staying for a moment with Ultimate, here's a general tip on Cookie *from* **Stuart Gibson** *(13), Plumstead Common, London SE18:*

To get all the ingredients into the bowl you have to position yourself at the top of the screen. When an ingredient hovers over the bowl you should go down, firing at the same time. repeat this until you have got all the ingredients. As for the nasties, you should try to shoot them down into the bin, but if you can't, try to shoot them straight otherwise they will go into the bowl.

From blasting food, we move to blasting ships, tanks and planes. **Lee Jones** *from Liverpool, has this to say about the US Gold* Beach-Head:

Always go through the Hidden Passage to get your points up and then you only need to shoot ten planes.



Torpedoes and mines block the way through the Hidden Passage in BEACH-HEAD.

When you come to blowing up the ships, the aircraft carrier is about 40.0 degrees and the little boat near the edge of the right hand side near the edge of the screen is about 20.0 degrees. If it says 39.0 degrees and under it says 100 too short, it will be 39.5 degrees, because 100 is 0.5 degrees.

Quite! I now know why I failed dismally at trigonometry! However, to prove the point that everyone has their own method and it may well be worth trying out more than one, here's a letter from **John Jackson** *from Sear Green, Beaconsfield, Bucks, on the same subject, but with slightly different figures.*

On the level where you must get the exact distance to sink the enemy ships, these are they. From right to left they are: 60.0, 55.0, 68.5 and 27.5. The moving ship is 51.5. Getting this right cuts down on ship losses for you and gets you to the next level much faster.

Hewson Consultants' Legend of Avalon *is obviously making a big impression on many CRASHERS, judging by the mail, but I wonder how well most are doing, as there haven't been all that many offering tips.* **Colin Eade** *from Framfield, East Sussex, however, has:*

The tips are what the star is used for in the second location from the start, and also how to get past the gate-house level.

After you have got the useful spells, energise, freeze, servant etc. , go back to the first location and follow my instructions using the spellls when needed. Firstly, what the star is used for. From the first location go east (the star location), go north, and then west (down a tunnel), go east and you should be in a room with two doors, very close to each other, take the right hand door, and take the key, come out again and go in the left hand door, select servant spell and move the servant with the key to the chest. The chest will open, give Maroc the key and then take the object from the chest. It should look like a yellow scroll. Now return to the location with the star. Hang around until a warlock materialises in the wall, then move the servant towards the warlock with the scroll. The warlock will go, and a white crystal will appear. Pick up this crystal and put it over the star. The points of the star will suddenly fill in, and this means the star will now act like the energise spell, except that the power is infinite – I have never found it to run out all the time I have been playing anyway. All you have to do is move onto the star and wait and watch your energy build up.

To get past the gate house level, go to the location with the adjacent doors, go west, go north, north and north again, now you should be in the room that is shown on the back of the cassette box. Take the servant with the key, open the chest and take the new object out (another key). Take this to the door and, surprise, surprise, the door will open. From here it is easy; just go through the door, and you're past the gate house level!

Colin also has a couple of questions for Derek Brewster, and they have been passed on.

Android 2 *has not been mentioned much recently, but it is still a fascinating and very hard game to master.* **D. Hobson** from Deepcar, Sheffield has a tip on it and one for Stonkers.

I have successfully completed *Android 2*, all three zones, the Flatlands being the most difficult. However, I have discovered a way to overcome the rapid loss of androids. For a successful completion you must position Android 2 at the bottom of the screen (Flatlands) where the maze can be more easily accessed. You will find that the millitoids all try to enter the maze, so they become easy targets. To prove that I have completed the game, you will find that Android 2's task begins again, yet this time the Bouncers etc are at least 3 times faster.

Stonkers. An easier way to defeat the opposition than the method suggested by S. Hennessy, is to position all your regiments together, each on individual sections. The opposition will attack, they are low on supplies and so can be easily defeated. You don't have to occupy the enemy base, just defeat the enemy.

PLAYING TIPS

I must say to anyone who thought computer games make people unfit that they should try Daley Thompson's Decathlon! *For a week the CRASH offices were filled with the rattle of cracking joysticks, one of the worst offenders being Mr. Robin Candy (who's waiting impatiently to get on with his POKEs) who drove us all mad. His main tip for playing the game was helpful – lay in a supply of joysticks!* **Mark Bishop** *from Tunbridge Wells in Kent, has some rather more practical things to say:*

You need one strong arm, a good amount of guts, stamina, and above all you need to be athletic!

Well that doesn't sound any more practical than the Candyman, but he goes on to say:

The 100m can be improved on only by getting a fast start. To do well in the long jump you need a lot of speed and aim for 50 degrees (I find 50 degrees better than the 45 degrees stated in the instructions). For the discus only hold onto one button, you will speed up as much as when you keep pressing. For the high jump you have to hit the keyboard very quickly and then when you are about to go over, hold onto the jump button. For the 110m hurdles you must get a good pattern. I find that you only need to let the runner take two steps in between each hurdle. For the shot put and javelin you should aim for 54 degrees, and don't go too fast in the 1500m

. . . and make sure your laces are tied, and there's a handkerchief in your pocket and. . . But wait, Mark hasn't finished! Oh no! He's written a poem. . .

Here's a word of advice,
for you today,
Read CRASH carefully
Before you play!

Decathlon is very tough
After playing you'll be fit
eventually you will be tired
and forced to quit.

If you train hard today,
and your records hold,
You'll be at the next Olympics,

Collecting for us a gold!

Thank you Mark, don't call us, we'll be in touch - one day. At least Mark sounds like he works at winning, **Craig Jack** *from Greenmeadow, Swindon, sounds like more of an armchair enthusiast!*

I have discovered a couple of bugs. In the 100m sprint, if you stay on the blocks until about 995 seconds and then run full pace, the time will reset itself and you should record a time of approximately 5 seconds. Tip 2. In the high jump, if you run until you are directly under the bar and then jump and hold the button down you should go underneath the bar without knocking it over, therefore registering a clearance. But you can only do this after about 2m 5cm.

I get the feeling I printed something like this last month (never get time to read the mag these days!) and I'm as disgusted by the lack of sportsmanship now as I was then. I've seen your picture Craig, the one sent to the HOS, and you look as honest as the day is long. How the camera lies.

Martin Leighton *from Chester is another weekend gold digger:*

While playing Ocean's *Decathlon* I discovered this tip for the discus. When Daley's speed is in the second square, throw the discus south east at an angle of 36 degrees and you will throw it a distance of 168.96 metres. I have achieved this four times.

All I can say is I hope Daley Thompson doesn't read CRASH because he'd probably turn white with horror at all this cheating. Do you read CRASH Daley?

Turning from the blood, sweat and tears of the track events to the mythical mists of the Celtic past, **Michael Rowe** *and* **Simon Dawson** *from Mansfield, Notts. , are hard at work on Gargoyle's* Tir Na Nog. *They haven't completed it yet, but have this to say about finding the somewhat necessary sword:*

Starting from the Altar of the Seal, walk right until in the Central Plain. Press Enter three times and you will be facing three doors. Take the first door on the left and you will be in the Forest of Cern. Go back through the door and keep walking until you come to the cave, walk through it and press Enter again three times, then walk left and take the first entrance (cross pathways) on the left. Now walk left. You will pass one door, but don't take this one because it leads into the Plain of Lies. Keep walking left to the second door and go through there. If you have followed the instructions correctly you should be at the sword. Use it wisely.

Micahel and Simon say they will write again when they have completed the adventure. I could be pensioned off by then. **B. Smith** *from Hilton, Derby, has a novel way of dealing with the Sidhe:*

If you are frustrated at being killed of by a Sidhe after a long trek from the Altar of the Seal then wait until the Sidhe has walked through your position, select the Option Key, Enter TIR NA NOG, and your man will be standing where he was and the Sidhe will have passed - also works on the cave wights??

I think you may find that Gargoyle Games are aware of this little bug and are putting it right, so it may not always work for everyone.

Quicksilva's Fred *never really grabbed me, I don't know why, but it has certainly lingered in the Hotline for some time.* **A. J. Walker** *of Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, has a method for getting easy points:*

If you shoot a ghost when it is half way through a wall, you lose all your bullets, but the ghost is trapped, provided you don't move. The ghost will then keep moving back and forth in the wall, giving you points. But beware, when they escape you must be quick to get away yourself.

Believe me, when a ghost leaps out of a wall I don't hang around. And talking of monsters **Steve Jarman** *from Newtown, Powys (just over the border from Ludlow), has the following advice on* Frank N. Stein *by P. S. S.*

Use the electric shock to reduce the reading on the meter if it gets too high. When trying to deactivate the monster, take a few moments to study the lay out. Watch out for ice. remember, when you go onto ice you won't stop sliding. On deactivation screens, if you wait for a creature above to move out of the way, don't hang around the spring you want, or you'll end up with a cannon ball between the eyes. Even with that info I can only reach level 9.

I liked the game, very playable and quite difficult. Finishing games that have ends (ie. not shoot em ups that just go on and on) has become all the rage, especially when it comes to getting your name into print as being the first to do so. We get a lot of letters claiming to be the first at something. **David Dixon** *from Gateshead, Tyne & Wear says:*

I am writing to tell you that I



am the first person to complete *Pyjamarama*. It was done at 10:01pm on Wednesday 14th November, having bought the game only the Saturday before.

Well that **is** *a very fast completion time, David, but I regret to say that you are far from being the first, since we had letters in well before you even bought the game from people who had clearly completed it. Our own 'mapping' dept had it finished about five weeks before your date. Mikro-Gen clearly thought the average date of comletion for most would be around the 5th of November!*

Mark Griffiths *of Southsea, Hants, says he hasn't seen any playing tips for Bug-Byte's* Rapscallion, *so he's written to put the matter straight.*

The Wilderness is the first stage. You need to touch a pixie to see the magic key and the magic shield. the shield protects you from the sleeping guard. There is nearly always a crystal or a pixie nearby. If you enter the room 'anyone for tennis' beware, because if you are a bird you will get stuck in the net, and as soon as you enter 'target practice' head for the floor as soon as you can or you will be shot. In the magic labyrinth you must get the magic eye. When you have this the three wizards become visible. You can only get the wizards when they are resting. When you have done this you must travel to 'concorde's nest'. Travel from the top of the room and you will be in 'insecticide spraying'. Travel right and you will see some exits, one of them is the way to the castle, but it changes, so try them all.

The castle is the hardest stage of them all. If you stay in a room for too long Rapscallion the Rogue will come and get you. At this stage you are required to collect containers, which need touching. When they are full size they can be touched. When you have both of them you will be able to get the magic wand, and when you have this wait for Rapscallion, who will have shrunk, to come and touch you. At last, you have the title deeds to the castle. I completed the game in an hour.

I said in my 'Look Back' piece that I thought Zombie Zombie *was a bit disappointing as a follow up to* Ant Attack, *but* **Gareth Cavacivti** *from Blackwood, Gwent, disagrees with me:*

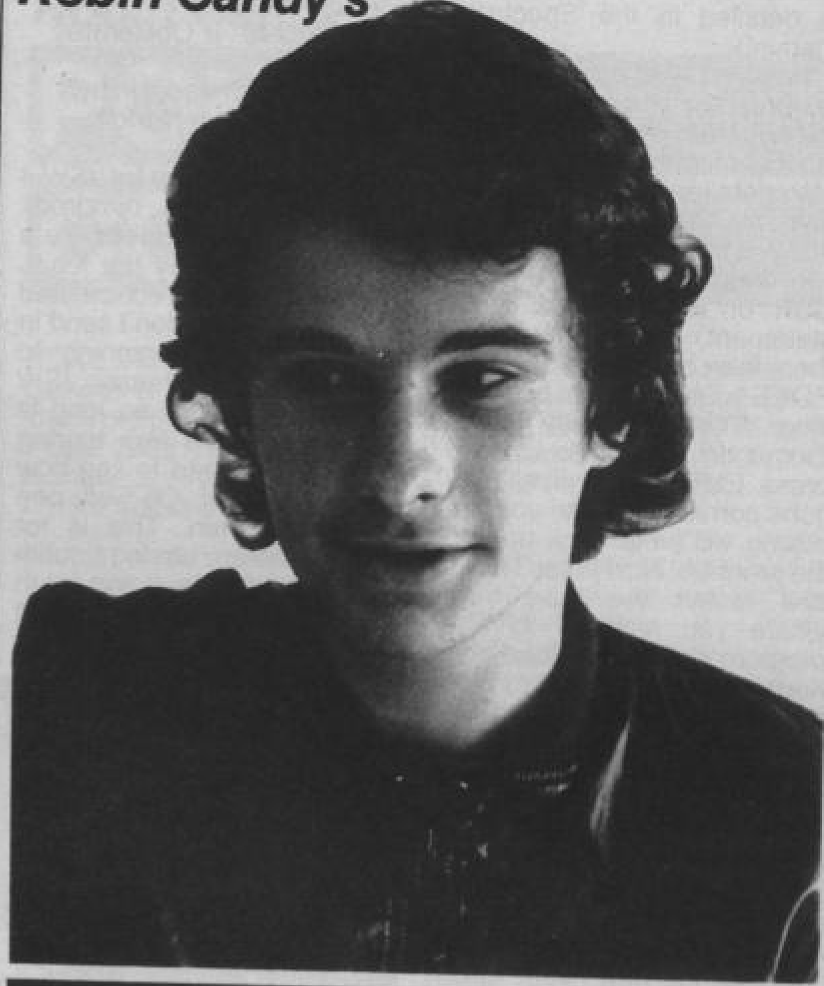
Anyone lucky enough to have a copy of *Zombie Zombie* by Quicksilva, might be having problems in killing zombies. To kill them you must first creep up on them from behind making sure that they don't see you. When you touch them on their back, they don't kill you but follow you. You then lead them up onto a wall of at least 3 blocks in height. Music will then play and you jump off the wall. The zombie will follow and die. A zombie, if it can't carry straight on, will turn left. I think *Zombie Zombie* is a great game and was worth more that the overall score of 80. Keep up the good work!

Well there we go. It's time to nip down to the market hall and get a pheasant plucked, or whatever they do, ready for the usual obscene (or do I mean obese) rights of Christmas dinner. Time to hand you over the the tender mercies of the King Street Hacker (as Scotland Yard know him), Robin Candy. Sorry if I didn't print anyone's letters, there are so many it is hard, but without the volume there wouldn't be the ideas, so please keep writing in, especially with tips on some of the older or more obscure games that rarely get a mention. Write to LLOYD MANGRAM, PLAYING TIPS, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. I know sometimes you would like a quicker and more direct reply to some problems, but it just isn't possible, otherwise I'd never get any articles or reviews done!

SPECIAL NEXT MONTH! Watch these pages for our huge map of The Edge game PSYTRAXX. Yes folks (LM hype dept.), all those thousands of rooms, laid out for you - DON'T MISS OUT!

And now – Here comes Robin!..

Robin Candy's



POKEs CORNER

We have been promising for a few issues a bumper bundle of deceitfulness, so over the past few weeks we employed the expert safe breaker ROBIN CANDY to compile this load POKEs. (The compiler used was the Psstek Hi-Valley MkXVI).

Over the recent (and not so recent) months, many of the country's best cheats have been sending in their routines and methods of cheating on an assortment of games. Here I am, to tell you how to get infinite lives on many games, so you – the arcade wally – might some day have the satisfaction of seeing your name in the all-creeping CRASH HALL OF SLIME; *(I think you're missing the point here, Robin – they're not supposed to cheat for the Hall of Slime, I know you do when you send your scores into PCG -* **LM***)* so you can once again hold your head up high when your best friend tells you about how he notched up his twelfth billion on *Sabre Wulf*; and you will be able again to compete against your two year-old little sister without being beat by too much on *Lunar Jetman*...

But still, there's no point cheating if you don't know how to.

What's the point to a POKE if you don't know where to put it in the first place. Of course most hardened CRASHERS know exactly where to shove a POKE, but for the few that don't let's kick off with how to put one in.

First you must get the Spectrum into **EXTENDED MODE**. This is done by pressing **CAPS SHIFT** and **SYMBOL SHIFT** together, then press **CAPS SHIFT** and **T** together and **MERGE** should appear on the screen. Once you have got **MERGE** on screen, press **SYMBOL SHIFT** and Ptogether twice, so that you have **MERGE ""**. Press **ENTER** and start the tape. When the screen comes back with the **OK** report after a few seconds, stop the tape. Now list the program (sometimes you may have to change the

PAPER or INK colour, and this is detailed in the Spectrum manual).

Now you must edit the line in the program which has the last **PRINT USR** or **RANDOMISE USR** statement in it. (Editing is also detailed in the Spectrum manual). Once you have done this you must insert the POKE just before that last **PRINT USR** or **RANDOMISE USR** statement, making sure that there is a : on either side of the POKE figures (: is got by pressing **SYMBOL SHIFT** and Ztogether). Once this is done press ENTER and if all has gone correctly the line you are editing will jump back up into the program. Now press **R** key, and restart the tape from where you stopped it. The program should now load normally. (Note: if you fail to stop the tape quickly when the OK report pops up, rewind it slightly before the second load).

Now onto *Jet Set Willy*, the program which brought pokemania to a high art, (*Manic Miner* having spawned it). Alas, the new hyper loads may bring a stop to all that...

Stephen Combordelle of Stockport sent these in:

POKE 35123, Ø Gets rid of all the monsters
POKE 36358, Ø Makes Willy jump until he hits something
POKE 36477, 1 Lets Willy fall as far as he wants
POKE 34275, 1Ø So you don't have to enter the WRITETYPER code to gain access to any sheet
POKE 5990Ø, 255 Disables the Attic bug.

Stephen wasn't the only person to send in these POKEs, but he was just lucky to have his letter pulled out of the multitude. Well, onto some more *JSW* POKEs. Don't worry if you weren't (or aren't) credited – we received literally hundreds and hundreds of letters on the subject, so it really is the luck of the draw, we didn't pay any heed to the death threats or the bribes *(Speak for yourself* **LM**).

POKE 41983, 256 = X Where X is the number of objects to be collected. This was sent in by **Stephen Bluck** of Stafford.

POKE 37874, Ø Items are collected as soon as you enter a room
POKE 35899, Ø The famous infinite lives!
POKE 36545, Ø Makes the Banyan Tree a bit easier
POKE 41983, 255 You have only to collect the tap to see the finale effect
POKE 36635, 239 You can now use Interface 2
POKE 3824Ø, Ø Obliterates the dreaded Martha
The above were sent in by **Mark Smith** from Norfolk.

Well that wraps it up for *JSW*. I know there are hundreds more, but most of them are a bit pointless to say the least. Thanks to all who contributed them, but please don't send in any more, I'm beginning to think that the only reason *JSW* stayed popular for so long is because people like tearing the program apart to see how they can alter it. Oh well, one more item then. This is for people who are having trouble putting POKEs in. It has been sent in by many readers, and it does the job for you - only for *JSW* though.



1Ø REM JSW LOADER
2Ø INK 7: PAPER 1: BORDER 1: CLEAR 32767
3Ø PRINT "JET SET WILLY IS LOADING"
4Ø LOAD "" CODE
1ØØ REM *(insert POKEs after here)*
1ØØØ RANDOMISE USR 33792

Type this program in, but between lines 1ØØ and 1ØØØ insert the POKEs that you wish to use. When you have finished inserting the POKEs (remember to use line numbers) run the program and start the tape and now your new poked version of *JSW* will load.

Now some POKEs for the Ultimate range of games. To start off with the much sought after *Sabre Wulf* monster killer POKE which comes in two forms. The first obliterates the materialising monsters and the second which just about obliterates everything but does have one side effect in that it makes an annoying sound and if you press fire everything reappears...

POKE 39702, 3Ø Gets rid of the materialising monsters
POKE 39393, Ø Which gets rid of everything

Both these POKEs were sent in by **Chris Colesell** of Stafford. To insert these is rather difficult because the line you have to edit is line Ø which cannot be edited in the normal way. This can be overcome by a simple POKE (which I can't find at the mo! I'll come back to it later on) or by a new loader which can be written incorporating the POKE like so:

1Ø LOAD "" SCREEN$
2Ø LOAD "" CODE: LOAD "" CODE: LOAD "" CODE: LOAD "" CODE:
3Ø POKE *(whatever)*
4Ø PRINT USR 23424

Enter this and run it, start the tape and the program will load (except the first part).

Now follows a tip for *Lunar Jetman* from **Paul Hutchinson** who decided to 'go it alone' after becoming disenchanted with trying Chris Sutherland's POKE (like a lot of people)! With his trusty DEVPAC in one hand and a cup of tea in the other he started on his quest for immortality on *Lunar Jetman* and he found it – so here it is, the definitive POKE for Ultimate's *Lunar Jetman*:

1Ø CLEAR 24575: PAPER Ø: INK Ø: BORDER Ø: CLS
2Ø FOR L = 1 TO 5: PRINT AT 6, Ø;:LOAD "" CODE: NEXT L
3Ø POKE 23439, 2Ø1: POKE 36965, Ø: RANDOMISE USR 32768

Run that program and start the tape and the program should load as normal. Spurred on by his success with *Lunar Jetman*, Paul decided to turn his talents to *Atic Atac*. Edit the loader (as shown elsewhere) and insert the following POKEs:

POKE 36519, Ø For infinite lives
POKE 35353, Ø
POKE 35362, Ø
POKE 36571, Ø
POKE 39092, Ø These four stop all energy drains
POKE 37229, 175
POKE 3726Ø, 175 These two make the doors decidedly nervous

And finally from Paul Hutchinson come some POKEs for *Frank N. Stein*, which is a bit naughty of him considering he works for P. S. S. These POKEs should be inserted in the loader just before the RANDOMISE USR statement:

POKE 34124, Ø This gives infinite lives on the version of *Frank N. Stein* which has a title screen and bonus lives.
POKE 28277, Ø :POKE 28278, Ø Gives infinite lives on the original version without the title screen.

All these POKEs are by **Paul Hutchinson** of London, who has just had his game *Xaviour* released by P. S. S. , and he goes on to say that the sequel will be even better.

For infinite lives on *Tranz-Am*, type in this little proggy, RUN it, start the tape and the game will load as normal but with infinite lives.

1Ø CLEAR 24319: LOAD "" SCREEN$: LOAD "" CODE: POKE 25446, Ø: LOAD "" CODE: LOAD "" CODE: LOAD "" CODE: PRINT USR 23424

For infinite lives on *Jetpac*, type in the above program but altering the CLEAR to CLEAR 24575 and the PRINT USR to 24576 then delete the previous POKE and add the following POKEs in its place:

Robin Candy's POKEs CORNER

POKE 25Ø15, 62
POKE 25Ø16, 5
POKE 25Ø17, Ø
POKE 25Ø18, Ø

For infinite lives on *Cookie* type in line 1Ø of the *Tranz-Am* routine yet again, but type in these POKEs instead of the original POKE:

POKE 28695, 62
POKE 28696, 5
POKE 28697, Ø
POKE 28698, Ø

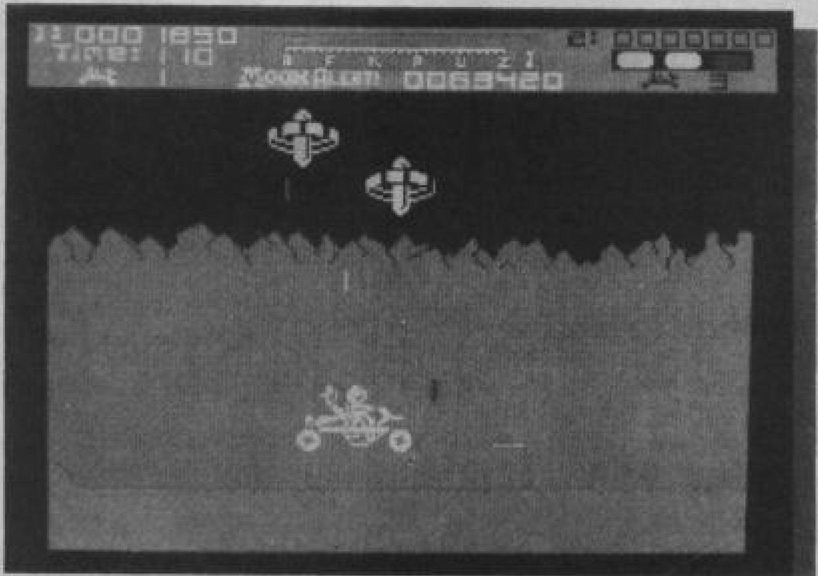
The above POKEs were sent in by **Richard Hyde** and **Steven Walters** of Bucks.

Arcadia **POKE 25776, Ø** Infinite lives, sent in by **Richard Hyde** and **Steven Walters**

Hunchback **POKE 26888, Ø** Infinite lives, sent in by **Simon Trigg** of Herts

The next bunch of POKEs are from **Paul Rowland** and **Mark Young** of W. Sussex. They wrote an extremely short letter but with the most PS's I've ever seen:

Defenda **POKE 37531, Ø** Infinite lives, and for the same game



Many peopl have written in asking me how I got that unbelievable score on Ocean's *Moon Alert*. Well the sad truth is –I cheated using a couple of POKEs that make playing *Moon Alert* totally pointless (the score was achieved while I was having a bath, I just left the Spectrum on to see how many thousands it could score while I was submerged). *(Bet you forgot to wash behind your ears* **LM***)*

POKE 39754, Ø Gives you infinite lives
POKE 42654, 195 And you just can't die, nothing kills you *(Great! I guess that should get state-of-the-art award for sheer minimalism -***LM***).*

Both of these POKEs are from a reader in Brussels, I can read his address but not his name, sorry whoever you are.

The rest of the POKEs are in no particular order because they are just odd POKEs which have drifted in out of the multitude of playing tip letters which ol' **LM** (notice how his name always comes up in bold face? It's a way of compensating for his lack of pay) has handed over.

Pyramid **POKE 44685, Ø** Limitless energy (forgot sender's name and address!)

POKE 34163, Ø Infinite smart bombs
Kosmic Kanga **POKE 36212, Ø** Infinite Lives
The following ones when put together in *Zip Zap*'s loader give you an infinite amount of energy:
POKE 53751, Ø
POKE 53752, Ø
POKE 53753, Ø
POKE 54142, Ø
POKE 54143, Ø
POKE 54144, Ø
POKE 54141, Ø

This next routine was sent in by **Caspian Richards**of Wigtownshire and it gives infinite lives and infinite time on *TLL*. First you must MERGE the loader then add lines 20, 50 and 3000, run the program then start the tape as normal.

```
2Ø DATA 55, 62, 255, 221,
33, Ø, 64, 17, 156, 191, 2Ø5,
86, 5, 62, Ø, 5Ø, 19Ø, 136, 5Ø,
15, 132, 2Ø1
5Ø FOR n=65423 TO 65444
3ØØØ RANDOMISE USR
65423
```

Caspian also sent in the POKE I was looking for earlier that brings program lines down from Ø so that you can edit them – **POKE 23756, 1**

S. Roberts of Norfolk sent in the following POKEs for more lives on *Ah Diddums* and *Wild West Hero*, they are:

POKE 24942, n Where n is the number of lives, up to a maximum of 250(*Ah Diddums*
POKE 23821, n Where n is the number of lives, in *Wild West Hero* it's up to a maximum of 22

Here's three more POKEs from far away Brussels. All three are for infinite lives on *Tutankhamun*, *Freez Bees* and *Pi-Balled* respectively:

POKE 27783, Ø
POKE 34610, Ø
POKE 44416, 5

Well that's about all the POKEs we have at the moment *(There's probably loads more, but he likes to horde them so no one else can beat his hi-scores when it comes to sending them into PCG -***LM***)* but keep em coming and make sure they work before you send them in because they only waste 'precious' space and people's time. Send in any tips, POKEs or microdrive conversions because they are useful, and thanks to all those who sent POKEs in and
HAPPY HACKING

(Is that it? Has he gone? Good – okay I can get rid of these brackets again –)) – Phew, that's better. Anyway, enough of these juvenile maunderings. Thank you Robin, don't call us, we'll call you. I suppose I shouldn't be too mean, after all, it is the season of good will and all that, but I find myself torn between gratitude that the management have given me a handy POKE helper who I can kick when things aren't going well, and bitterness that he gets paid out of my salary. Life's never fair! Anyway, Robin Candy's POKE CORNER looks set to be a sort of regular, so, do as he says, and keep them coming in. See you next year - **LM.**

There is a staggering number of monthly and weeky magazines in existence. In the computer field alone, W. H. Smith shops may well have to find shelf space for as many as 80 titles. Each title has its own style and its own 'look'. Readers may well be forgiven for thinking that a magazine just 'happens' every month, but behind the style and the look a lot of effort goes into it throughout many stages. This article doesn't set out to show how every magazine arrives at your newsagent every month, we're just looking at CRASH. . .

INSIDE CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

CRASH is perhaps a little unusual compared with most other computer magazines. For a start off it is not produced by one of the major publishing houses which include EMAP (Computer & Video Games, Sinclair User), Argus Specialist Publications (Home Computing Weekly, Games Computing), VNU Business Publications (Personal Computer -Weekly, -World and Games) and the giant IPC (Big K, and through its Business Press section, Your Computer). All of these organisations have their headquarters in or around London. CRASH is published by Newsfield Limited, based in the small Shropshire town of Ludlow – about as far away from computers as you could imagine. But that's one of the wonders of the home computer – they're everywhere!

It was one of the major points in the concept of CRASH when it started a little over a year ago, that reader input would be an important aspect of the magazine, and in the light of that we have always tried to be straightforward with any comments on the contents of the publication. I doubt, for instance, that any other title in existence has had such a strong two-way dialogue with its readers over magazine aspects like spelling or typesetting errors, as we have had over this year! Continuing that policy of openess, we felt it would be interesting to give readers a brief insight into how the magazine is actually produced, starting from the moment one issue has 'gone to bed.'

'Going to bed' might be a good place to start – it's what most CRASH staff feel like doing when an issue is finished! But the phrase goes back to the earliest days of printing, when pages where impressed with their contents on huge machines where the text was etched onto blocks of copper laid on a solid 'bed' and the paper was pressed onto the inked plates by a heavy roller. Things have changed quite a bit, as we shall see. . .

THE FUNCTIONS

AS in most things, there are departments to CRASH which each have their own responsibilities. Broadly these are Editorial, Production, Advertisement, Administration and Finance. Finance falls outside the scope of this article. Editorial organises the written material, Production designs and lays out the issues, Advertisement secures advertisers and their ads, and Administration (naturally) largely cocks up everyone else's work!

Editorial, Production and Advertisement are very often kept quite separate in most organisations, but not so with CRASH. Each issue is planned at the time of working on it, and it is important to keep all departments closely in touch with each other, often complementing each others' efforts. It is also worth bearing in mind that although this article may make it appear that things happen in clear-cut stages, usually all the processes are going on at once – it's chaos at times, or, as the favourite phrase would have it, 'It's a nightmare!'



A daily production meeting taking place around the editor's desk. Present are Roger Kean (editor), Oliver Frey (art editor), David Western (production design), Matthew Uffindell (software reviews), and Kevin Foster (assistant editor).

PLANNING

THE first thing to be decided is of how many pages will the issue consist? This is dependent on several factors like, how many advertisers are there, how many games are expected to be reviewed, how many competitions will there be, and so on. Advertising is a very important factor, because it governs the number of pages it is economical to print. In the 60s paper was only a fraction of the total production cost of a magazine. As a result it was news stand sales that made the publisher his operating costs and some of his profit. Today, paper costs make up almost two-thirds of the production cost – as a result news stand sales only account for a part of the operating costs and ad revenue has to make up the rest and hopefully end up with some profit.

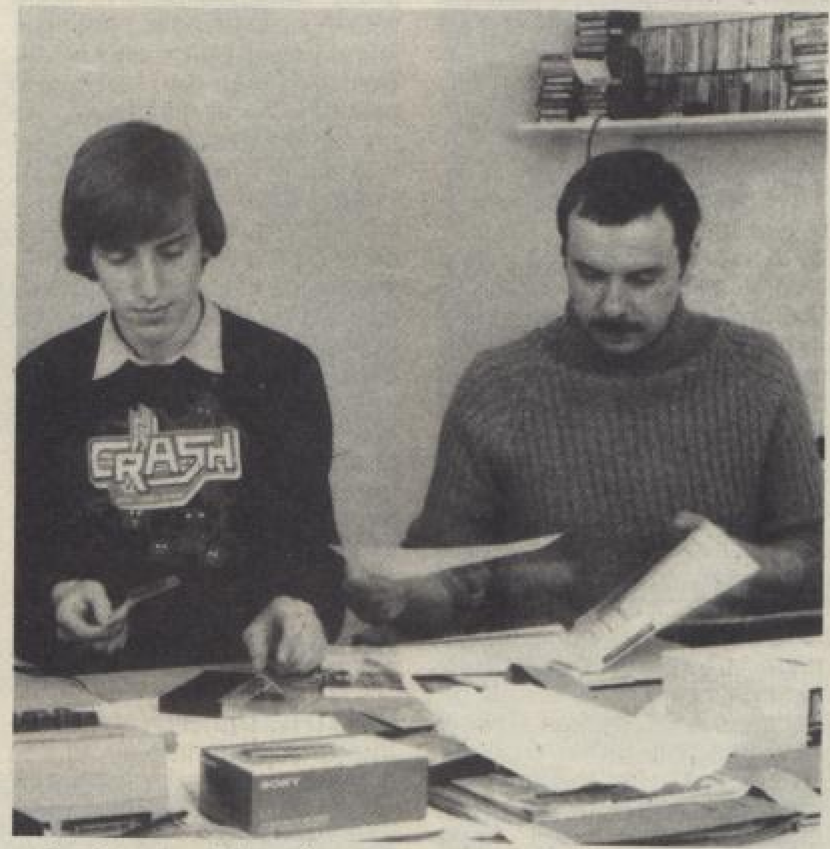
Once these items have been

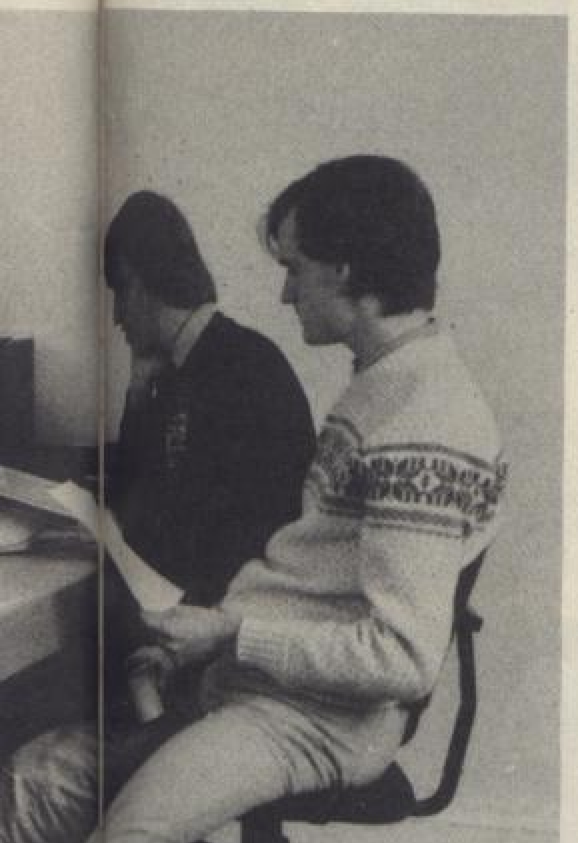
clarified and the pages decided upon, the planning really starts. The function of the Editor (Roger Kean) is to oversee the general scope of the written material. He also writes quite a chunk of it, helping with reviews, articles and competitions. Kevin Foster is the Assistant Editor. He is responsible for incoming news items, organising competitions with software houses and making sure the details are all written up ready for typesetting. Roger liases with outside contributors like Derek Brewster and Angus Ryall, ensuring that their material arrives on time.

Each morning there is a production meeting. This sometimes only lasts for a few minutes and involves both the editorial and the production people. It helps to keep everyone informed as to what is going on. During the first week of an issue at these daily production meetings the issue is planned out. By the end of the week the Tick Off sheet can be drawn up – we'll look at that under the Production heading later.



With the outside reviewer's reports in, Matthew and Roger collate and write up the review. Spectrum and monitor sit cheek by jowl with the Apricot computer into which all the material is typed ready to go to typesetting.





EDITORIAL

ONE of the most important aspects of CRASH editorial is the games reviews. The process of reviewing games goes on all the while. 18 year-old Matthew Uffindell is the in-house reviewer and as such organises the other reviewers. This entails logging cassettes as they arrive from software houses and seeing that the review team get them in good time to be able to report back. CRASH has six regular reviewers ranging in age from 14 to 30 who tackle the arcade games. They come in from day to day, collect games and review report forms, returning everything when they have finished. It is a policy that at least three of them get to see every game.

When the reviews are being written up for typesetting, the introductory pieces are usually written by either Roger Kean or Lloyd Mangram aided by Matthew, who plays the game as the review is being written to double check on the stated facts given by the various reviewers.

Meanwhile, Kevin checks press releases for news material and calls back anyone if he wants more detail. He also pre-sorts incoming letters to ensure that Derek Brewster receives his Adventure Trail letters and Lloyd Mangram gets his Forum mail. The pre-sorting is a big job as many letters contain playing tips and hi-scores as well as general Forum information.

Gradually, during the three weeks of an issue, all the material comes together and is typed into an Apricot computer using a word processor program called Superwriter. The resulting floppy discs are sent to London where the typesetters do the rest.

TYPESETTING

IN the early days of mass printing typesetting meant exactly what it said. From a written manuscript a typesetter actually cast the printing letters in metal (usually lead), or he already had stacks of pre-cast

Sorting competitions is quite a task.



letters, rather like the ones you get in a John Bull printing kit. These were arranged in trays as a 'make-up' from which the page would eventually be printed. In fact he actually set the type. Similarly any pictures, photographic or drawn, would be engraved onto plates and set flush in with the type. Today it's all done with computers, but the old words remain. A typeface (ours is called Helvetica) is called a *font* (or *fount*, from the word metal *found*ry). Adding a larger space between lines of type is called 'adding lead', because that's what you did, add blank lead.

Now the information is typed into a computer and a floppy disc is slotted into a typesetter photo unit, which contains numerous different type faces, and the result is photographed onto a roll of bromide paper, which is processed just like an ordinary photograph. But the typesetter needs to know certain vital things from the editorial department. These include factors like how wide will the printed column be (the column you are looking at now is a quarter column – four to the page), will it be justified (this colum is justified – those in the Forum for example are unjustified, as they are ragged on the right), what point size will the type be in (this is 9 point), what type face (this is Helvetica Roman, Helvetica Bold looks like **this** and Italic like *this*. The sub-headings on these pages, for instance are in 12 point Helvetica bold condensed which looks like **this**). All this information is included with the floppy disc and the typesetter machine does it automatically.• The resulting bromides are returned to CRASH for the production department. It is an early example of where editorial and production must work together, since it's no use editorial getting a piece typeset across a quarter column if the production plan calls for a third colum or half page.

SCREEN PHOTOGRAPHY

AS the reviews are being written up, the games must also be photographed. This is done by Production Designer David Western. It's quite a simple process, but time consuming, and involves the use of the excellent **Microvitec Cub Monitor**with a camera pointed at the screen at a set distance. Here, Matthew usually divides his time between review writing and helping with the photography, since it requires someone to play the game to a certain point, while David photographs. The **Cambridge Slomo** has also proved invaluable in getting good freeze frames.

The colour screens are the first to be taken because the colour work in CRASH takes the longest to prepare for printing and must be ready at least a week before the rest. It is equally important, therefore, that the editorial side gets those reviews and articles written first.

Once the photographs have been taken, processed and contact printed (all done in-house), the captions can be written for them. The black and white screen pictures are then enlarged ready for layout.

PRODUCTION

THE heart of CRASH lies in the writing and in the layout, or design, of the magazine. It is a long and complicated business. As we have seen, it starts with the daily production meetings, from which emerges a plan for the issue. the plan is shown as a 'Tick Off' sheet, basically a list of all the pages whcih shows where the colour pages fall, and what goes on each page. It's called a 'Tick Off' sheet, because when a page is totally finished ready for printing, it gets ticked off and can be forgotten – well, almost forgotten!

Juggling with the tick off sheet is a work of art. First of all the advertisers who have booked space have to be slotted in, bearing in mind their requirements. They all want to be on right hand pages at the front of the magazine, for instance! CRASH is printed in several sections of pages comprising of 32 pages per section. In those 32 pages there will be 16 which can be in full colour, and they fall in very specific places, which makes the juggling act even harder. It's all too easy to end up with too many adverts one after the other, which doesn't look good.

With the tick off sheet planned out reasonably well (it changes daily in minor ways due to alterations in design, or because an article ends up being longer than originally planned for), layout can start.

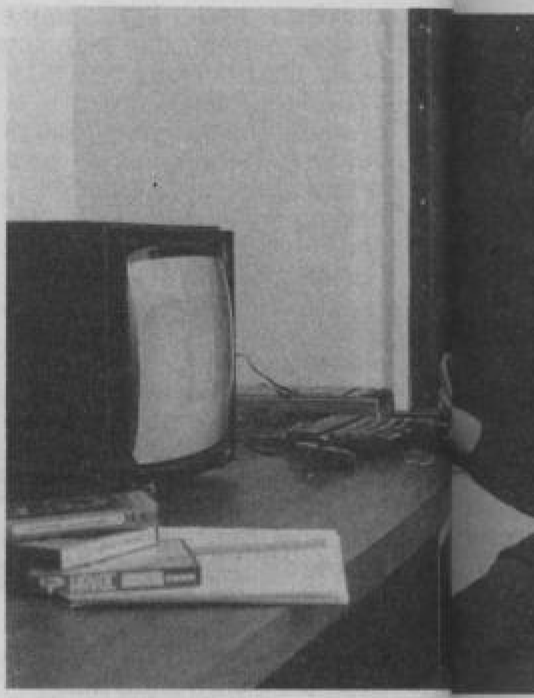
CRASH is layed out on grid sheets. These sheets, slightly larger than A3 size, contain two pages side by side, pre-printed with pale blue lines which denote the maximum page size (A4), text area (so that there is a neat margin all round) and other details like the vertical quarter, third and half page columns for lining up the text.

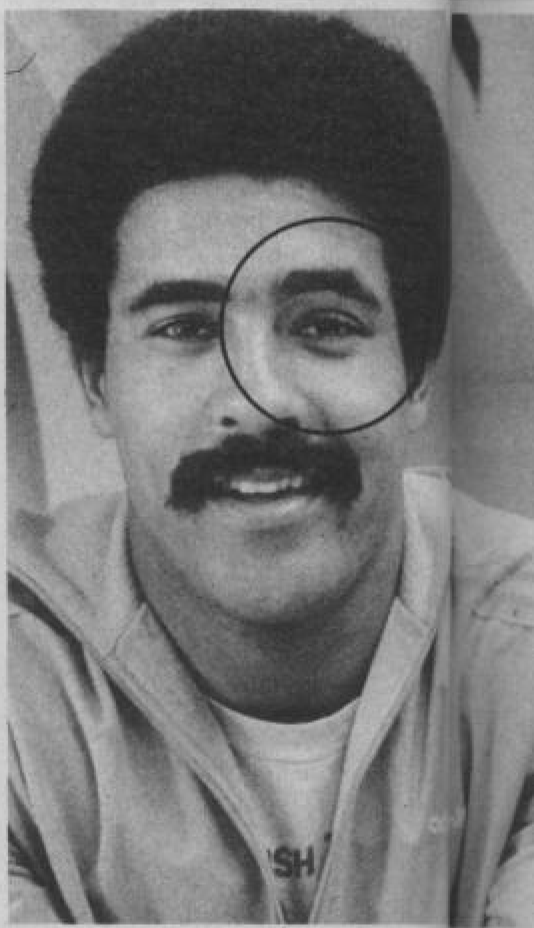
The bromides which have arrived from the typesetters containing all the written material, are trimmed and stuck down on the sheets. It is here that the real skill comes in, because the typesetting must be cut up and arranged on the page in an orderly and pleasing manner, leaving room for pictures and captions. At the same time the photographs must be slotted in. A photograph is referred to as a *contone* or continuous tone, meaning it is made up of every element of grey from black through to white. The printing press won't be able to cope with this, as all mono printing is literally only black and white. Before it can be stuck into position on the grid sheet, the photograph must be converted into a *PMT* which stands for Photo Mechanical Tint (a tint is lots of regular dots). This is done on the Process Camera, a machine which can reduce or enlarge a photograph through a fine optical screen of tiny dots. The resulting bromide looks like the original, but is actually made up of thousands of black dots of varying size (see picture). The PMTs may then be stuck down in position to complete the page.

ADVERTISEMENTS

ANOTHER function of the production department is to ensure that advertisers' material arrives on time, in the correct state, and goes off to the printer. In the main there is little production work to be done on ads, as the advertisers should have already done it all. It merely remains to attach a piece of paper to the film containing the ad and write on it the page it should appear on so that the printer knows. But in some cases additional work is required. This may be minor, like the alteration of the advertisers' coupon code which tells him what issue of which magazine the coupon came from. Sometimes it may mean doing quite complex process work on the process camera to get the ad into a fit state for printing.

We do some of the more simple colour editorial work in-house, but most of it has to

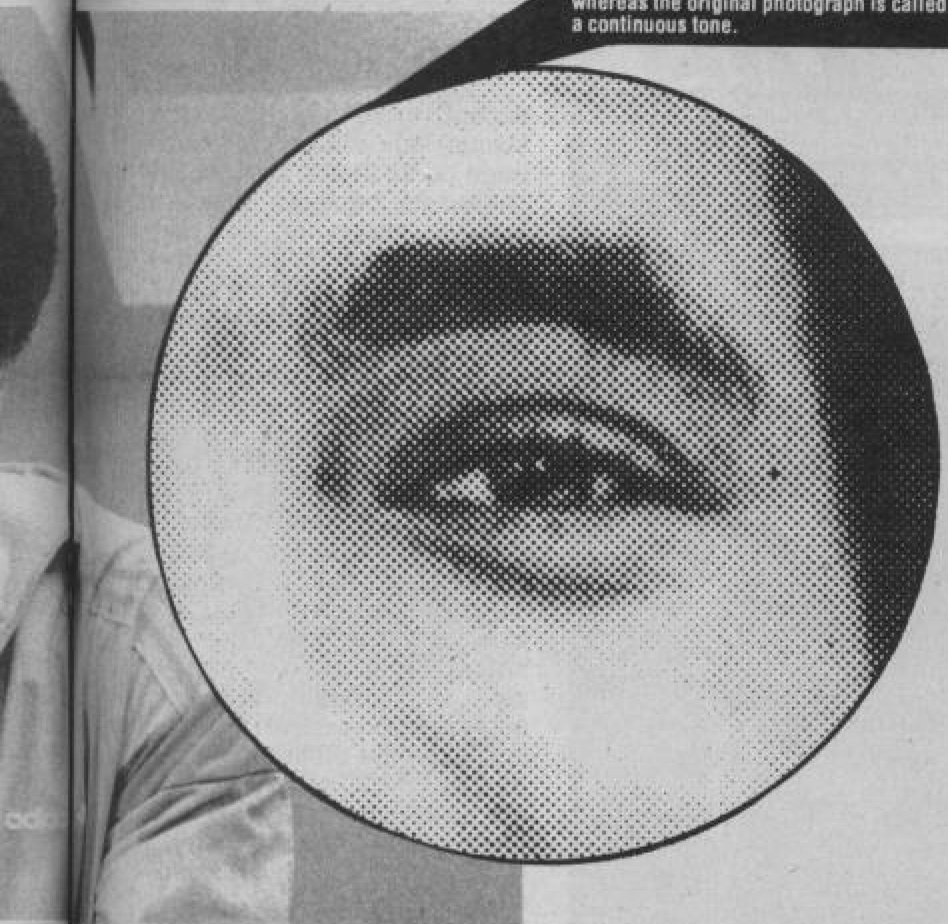








Game screens being photographed off the Microvitec Cub Monitor. Recently, some magazines have taken to using screen dumps made on colour ink printers, but at CRASH we still think that the 'feel' of a photograph is better. The camera is usually set to a shutter speed of or a second to take account of the TV roll bar. That's why freeze frame facilities are essential for a still picture, and that's where the Cambridge Slomo device comes in handy.



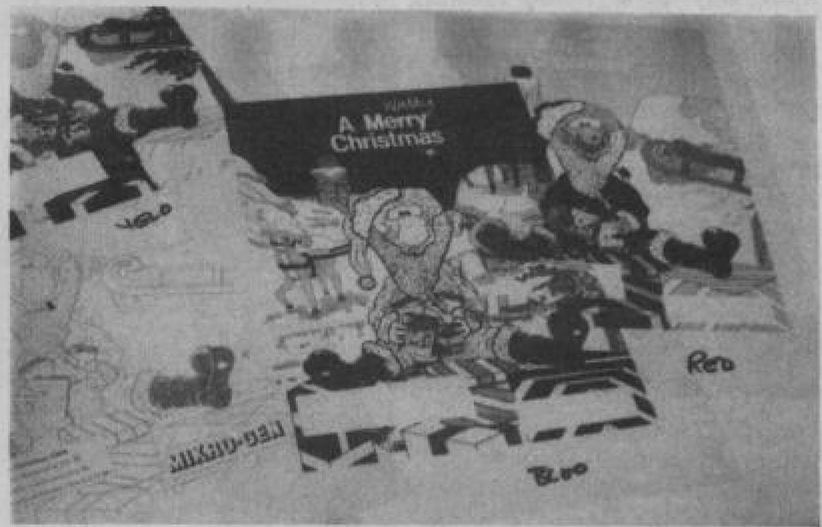
You may think that the pictures on these pages are photographs. In fact they are not, because a photograph is made up of a range of greys. These pictures are made up of black dots. In this example, the circled area of the picture has been blown up to show the black and white dot structure. All photographs in magazines and newspapers are done in this way. The dots are created photographically in the process camera by using a plastic screen made of very fine, regular dots. It is called 'screening' and the result (which is a PMT) is usually called a half tone, whereas the original photograph is called a continuous tone.



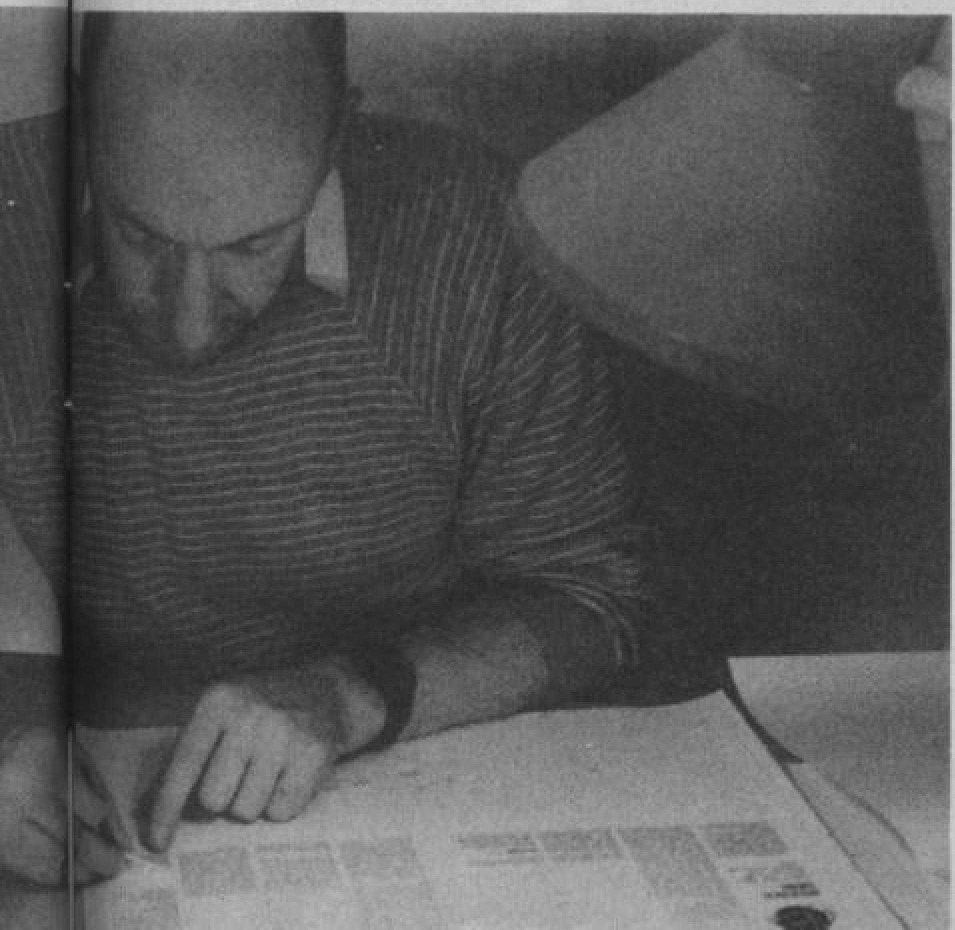
This is the 'Tick Off' sheet for the Christmas Special issue which you are reading. It details the pages, where colour falls, and what will happen on every page. The tick off sheet mutates as the issue progresses and alterations are made to the plan, but without it, layout would be impossible.



Photographs for news pages or review pages have to be sized to fit the slot left for them on the page. The process camera is not only able to 'screen' the photographs into PMTs (half tones), but also to enlarge or reduce them to fit the designer's requirements at the same time.



A set of advertiser's film separations on the light table. The four pieces of film carry information to be printed in Magenta, Cyan, Yellow and Black. The production department only has to 'tag' these with a piece of paper bearing the page number on which the ad is to appear, and send them on to the printer.



CRASH is laid out on grid sheets (or layout sheets). The detail of the columns and page sizes is printed in a pale blue ink, which the process camera can't 'see', as the process materials used are only sensitive to red or black. So that when typesetting is stuck on the sheets and they are photographed in the process camera, all the blue lines remain invisible. These lines are used for lining up typesetting, half tones etc.
Here we see David Western placing a piece of typesetting on a grid sheet. The typesetting comes in a long roll which must be chopped to fit the page, and trimmed to just outside the writing, so that the lines between the columns can be drawn in afterwards.

be sent to London, to a specialist house. Pages with colour have the text stuck down and are marked up to show where the colour transparencies should go. Modern high speed colour printing is done using only four colours, Magenta, Cyan, Yellow and Black. Any colour photograph must be scanned and separated so that film is produced for each of the four colours. The film is, of course, in black and white, and contains the photographs in the form of a PMT, ie. thousands of dots. A set of four pieces of film containing the page is known as a set of separations, because the four colours have been separated from each other. When each of these four layers is printed one on top of the other in register in its proper colour, the result looks as if it is in full colour just like the original. It is in this form that advertisers' film should arrive.

Eventually all the grid sheets are laid out, complete with their headings, text, captions, pictures in PMT form, page numbers and any illustrations and they are almost ready for the printer. The artwork in CRASH is done by Oliver Frey. While the issue is being laid out, he will be painting the cover, the comic strip Terminal Man, any other colour work that is required, and adding small black and white illustrations where David has left room for them. His colour work also gets sent off to the specialists in London to be scanned and screened and planned together with any text.





Oliver Frey at work on some colour art for the issue. Oliver works with both conventional brushes and an airbrush, using inks on board. Often the originals are twice the finished size to allow for more detail work. This board will be sent to London where it will be turned into colour separations on a laser scanner, and then combined with the relevant text. The text is stuck down on a separate grid sheet.

PRINTING

MOST magazines today are printed on high speed Web Offset machines, which are enormous. The web refers to a vast, continuous roll of paper, big enough to print 8 or 16 pages simultaneously on either side. Offset refers to the fact that the image on the printing plate is inked, makes contact with a roller, the image is transferred to this roller, which then contacts with the paper – in other words the plate and paper never actually make contact, they are offset form each other.

The plates which are strapped into the printing press, have been made from film.



The Process Camera. Artwork or photographs to be processed are placed on the copy board at the bottom, under a plate of glass. A vacuum is applied to keep everything absolutely flat. Powerful lights either side illuminate the artwork. On top is another vacuum head. Here the bromide paper or film is placed onto which the artwork is to be photographed. Sometimes the bromide paper onto which the image will be projected is placed face down on top of a plastic optical screen of dots to make a PMT or 'half tone'.

CRASH shoots its own mono film. This simply means that the grid sheets containing two completed pages are placed under the process camera and photographed onto a similar sized sheet of photo film. The result is a black and white negative. The process camera does not 'see' pale blue, so any of the grid sheets' lines used for layout, do not photograph through. Colour is done similarly, except there are the four-colour film sheets for each page, and these are usually contacted back to make a positive image on the film (which is easier for the printers when it comes to lining up all those dots in register between the four layers).

All this film, including the advertisers' film is sent to the printer, in our case Carlisle Web Offset in Cumbria. There they take the film and stick together pages in blocks of 8. The 8 film pages then get laid on top of specially photo-sensitised plates and exposed to ultra violet light. The film image is transferred to the plate, and whether it is from negative or positive film, the image on the plate comes out as a positive. These flat plates are then carefully positioned on the printing press and rolled into a drum. The Harris presses are capable of printing about 30, 000 copies an hour, and the pages come off the press already folded, so that several sections can be slipped one inside the other ready for stapling and final trimming.

From the printer the bundles of CRASH are delivered to carriers under instruction from Comag, the distributors of CRASH. Before the issue is printed Comag, will have done all the work neccessary to ensure that newstrade wholesalers have got their orders in. This is what decides the actual print run.

CRASH
MICRO GAMES ACTION

T-shirts & Binders Offer



Great T-shirts in high-quality 100% cotton with double stitching on neck and shoulder seams for lasting wear. Three sizes, in black with a brill **CRASH** design in three colours.

£4.50 incl p&p

Fab **Sweatshirts** are long-sleeved, heavy quality and fleecy lined with double stitching on neck and shoulder seams for durability. Colourfast, machine washable navy blue with **CRASH** design in three colours. Three sizes.

£8.95 incl p&p

Chest sizes: (**S**)mall, 34in-36in
(**M**)edium, 38in
(**L**)arge, 40in

Our fat binder doesn't just look impressive with its silver blocked **CRASH** logo and dark blue finish, it's also strong enough to hold a year's supply of **CRASH** away from your friends! And it's **only £4.50** including postage and VAT!

Build yourself the most comprehensive manual on Spectrum software ever seen! Save your issues of CRASH month by month, and turn them into the hard cover with the fattening soft centre!

FREE IN-DEPTH INDEX!

As **Lloyd Mangram** mentioned in his letters page, he's been told to get it together (we've generously provided him with a second tiny desk) and organise an Index for the 12 issues your binder will hold. The index is **absolutely FREE** to anyone who orders the binder and will be sent automatically in January.

So make sure you turn your issues into the **CRASH Spectrum Software Encyclopaedia!**

Be a Superior Alien with your very own CRASH T-shirt and sweatshirt!

Please send me ....CRASH T-shirts @ £4.50 **S**☐ **M**☐ **L**☐

..............**Sweatshirt** @ £8.95 **S**☐ **M**☐ **L**☐

Please send..............**CRASH** Binder(s) at **£4.50**
(overseas orders please add 40p).

Name: ....

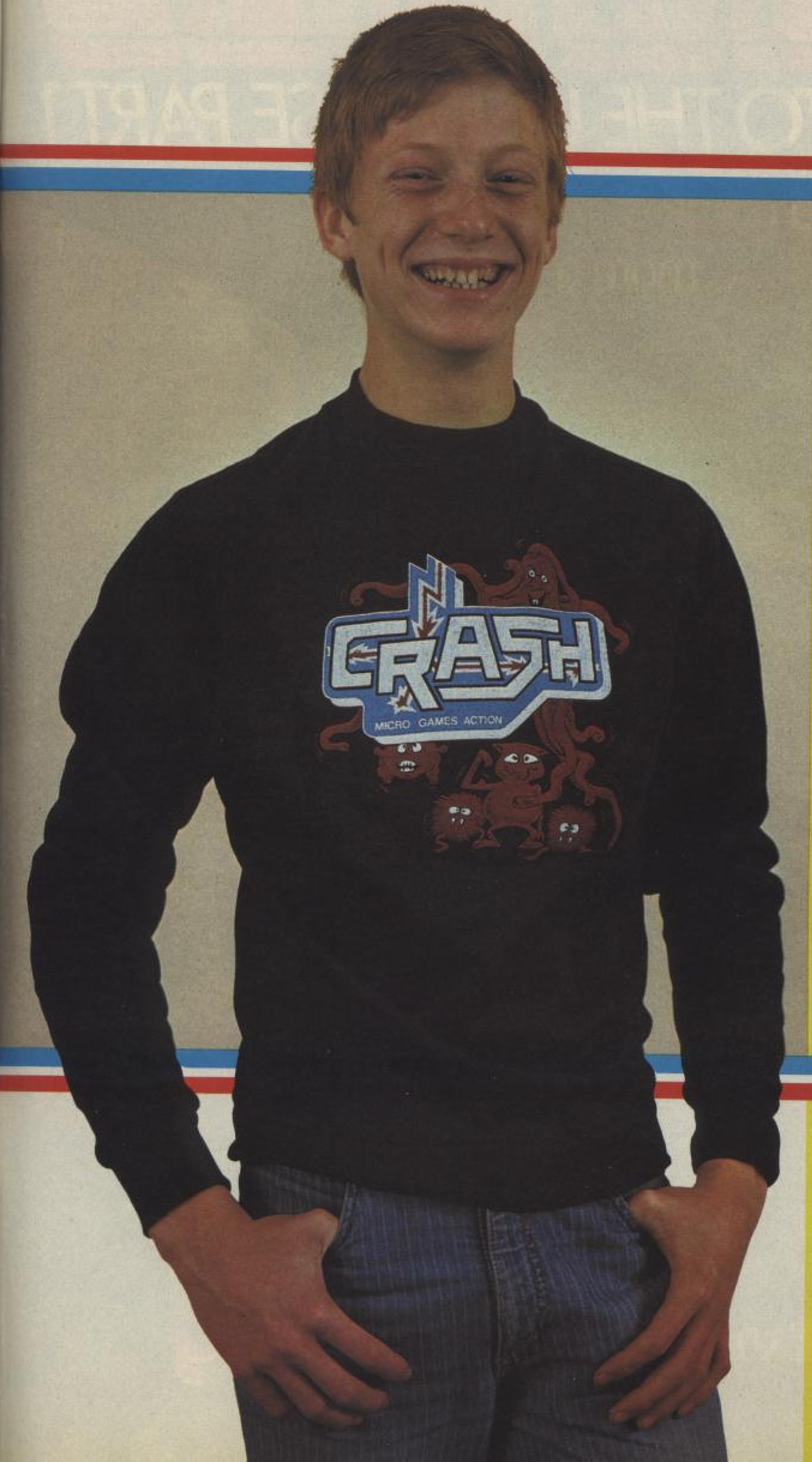
Address: ....

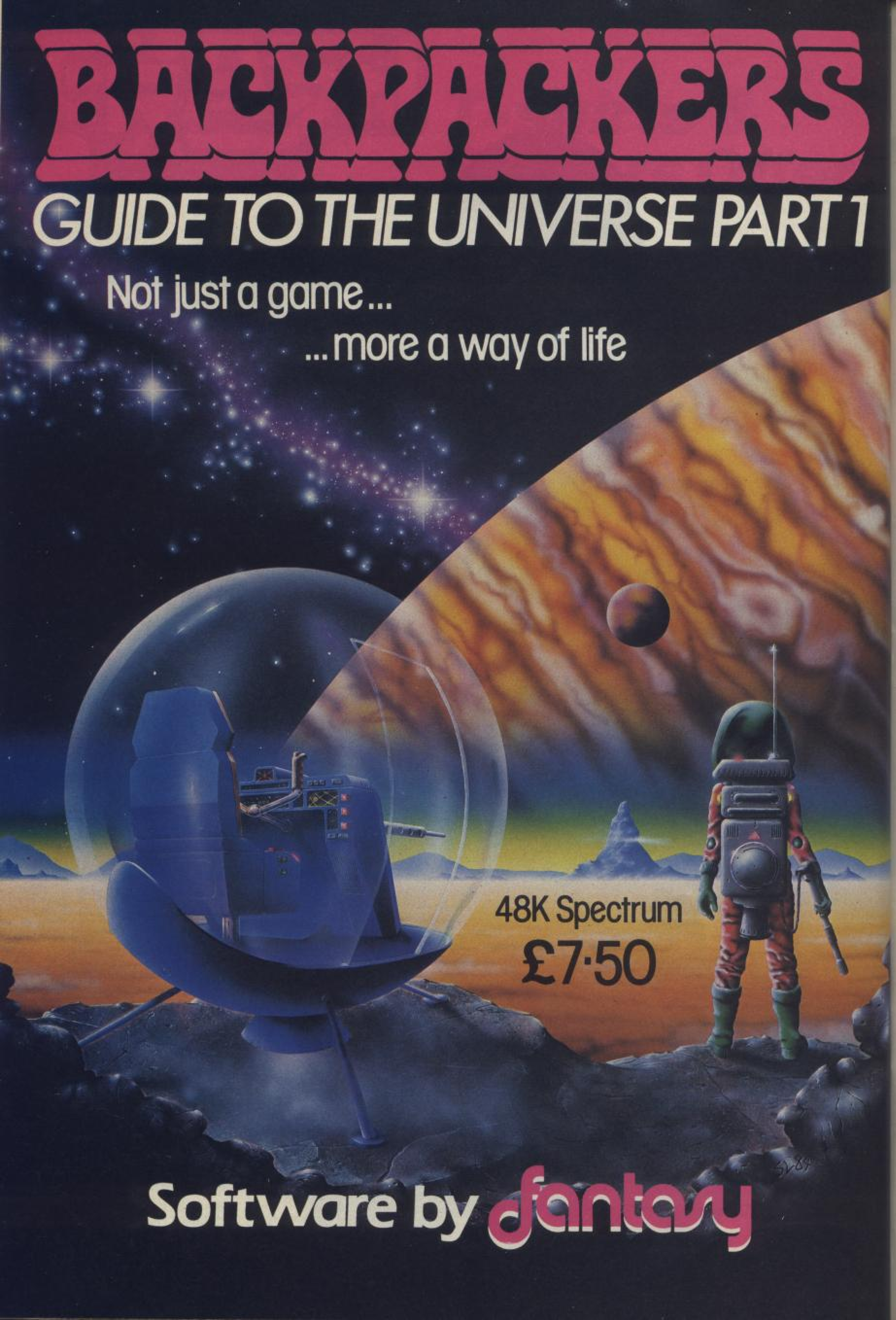
....

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I enclose Cheque/PO payable to CRASH MICRO £..................
Please allow 28 days for delivery

CRASH MICRO, Freepost, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1BR

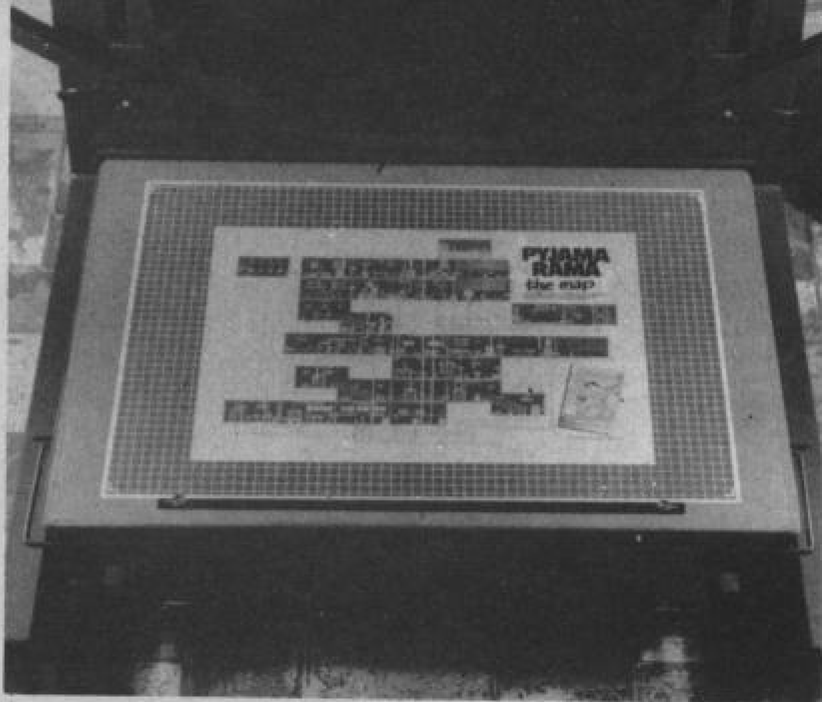

CRASH
MICRO GAMES ACTION


BACKPACKERS
GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSE PART 1
Not just a game...
...more a way of life
48K Spectrum
£7·50
Software by fantasy

ADMINISTRATION

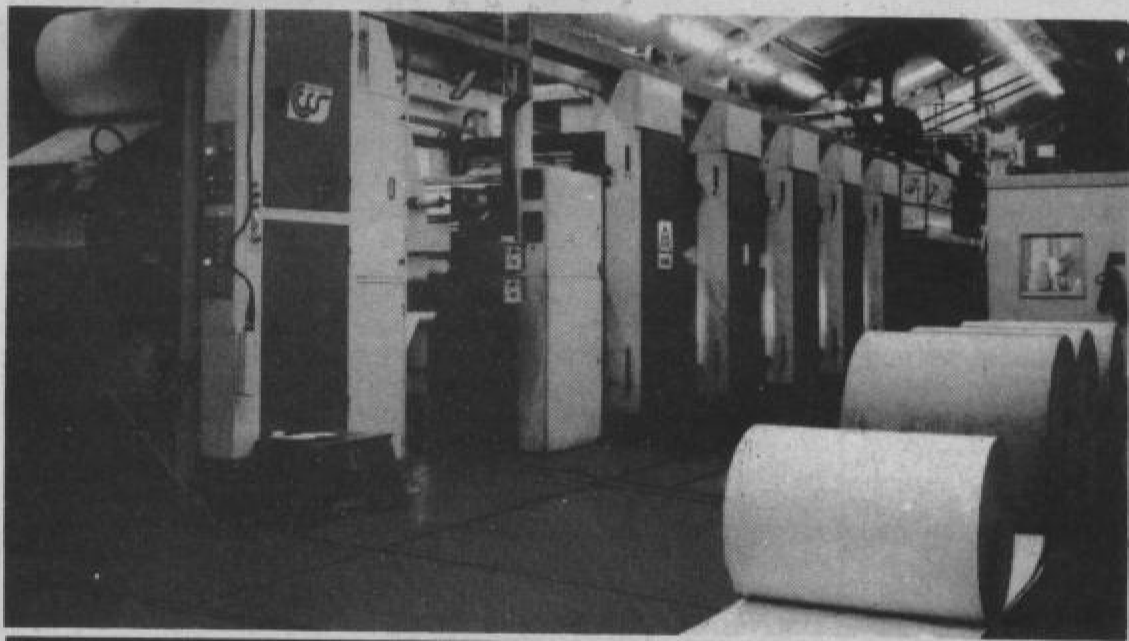
AS you can see, there is quite a lot that goes into producing an issue of CRASH every month, and this is only scratching at the surface. An important administrative area is liasing between printer and distributor to get the print run right. Put simply, magazines sell through news agents. the news agent is stocked by his local wholesaler, the wholesaler gets his copies from the distributor, who organises the whole machinery. To keep track of everything Comag uses computers extensively, not only for accounting purposes, but also for collating information relating to demand, so that publishers like CRASH can see where sales are good and where they are not so good.

But another important administrative area is internally seeing that everything happens when it should, and this includes dealing with the Hotline and competition results. Administration also has to look that we get paid for advertising, and don't get burned fingers from companies like Imagine, who can run up enormous bills without paying them. It's a fine balance.



A completed spread of two pages goes under the camera to be 'negged', shot to negative film. The film used is a special rapid print lith film (it only reacts to black or white, not grey). After exposure this film is fed into a processor which develops, fixes, washes and dries the film in about 1 minute.

Negative films are often speckled with fine pinpricks caused by dust, which is impossible to avoid. These will end up as little black speckles on the printed page, so they are 'spotted' out on the negative with a pen which contains a red ink. Pages which will appear in colour then go through a second stage where the negative is contact printed to another sheet of rapid print film in the process camera to result in a positive image.



This is one of the Harris-Marinoni Web Offset Presses at Carlisle's plant in Cumbria. Left foreground is the paper tower which carries the rolls of paper (some of which can be seen on the right). Beyond the paper tower you can see the five 'heads'. Each 'head' carries two drums around which the plates are wrapped and the offset rollers which transfer the inked image to the paper. Thus both sides of the paper are printed with 8 pages on either side. The first four 'heads' are for the colour pages, the first one prints the Cyan, second prints the Magenta, third prints the Yellow and the fourth prints the Black. The fifth 'head' prints the mono only pages. Beyond the five printing units you can just see the oven through which the paper passes. This bakes the ink dry before the roll passes into the folding station (not visible) where the roll is automatically collated (16 pages of colour and 16 of mono), folded into a finished section and roughly trimmed. Later the other printed sections will be added, stitched and trimmed to the finished A4 size, bundled in 50s and delivered to Comag, distributors of CRASH.

BACK TO BED

IN only another few days this issue will be going to bed, and a new year will be arriving. There is always a rush at Christmas time to get magazines through printers who are packed to capacity, and this one has been quite a big issue. By the end of this week, as it comes to shooting the film, most CRASH staff will be repeating the old phrase - 'It's a nightmare!' But a few days after that, they'll be knuckling down to the first issue for 1985 – it never stops!



Copies of CRASH reach the newsagents through our distributor, COMAG, one of the largest in Britain. Their sales force liase with the news wholesalers throughout the country, two of the most important being W. H. Smith and J. Menzies. A large sales force ensures that orders for copies are kept up to the minute. The hub of the exercise is, of course, the computer which keeps tabs on copies ordered and sold.

CRASH technical man is Franco Frey, seen here delving into the innards of the Spectrum + in preparation for an article.





FRONT



FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT AT THE FRONT
ANGUS RYALL

Direct response! I've finally done it! Two issues ago I bemoaned the fact that the software industry was so complacent – it seemed that no matter what I wrote or said, I couldn't get through the thick skins of the people who need to buck their ideas up. But – over the last month it seems to have worked.

First of all **John Merry** (of *Reichswald* fame –now of **Scorpio Gamesworld**) rang up to say that not only was *Reichswald* a brilliant game (a point which I obviously missed when reviewing it) but that my remarks about his girth were totally unfounded and libellous. Quoth he: 'This kind of petty slander makes my blood BOIL!'

Me: 'Sorry John, I was only trying to liven up a really tedious subject. '

I was hoping that John would send in a couple of 'before and after' pics as irrefutable proof, but instead he burbled on about withdrawing all Scorpio's advertising from CRASH (ho-hum, here we go again) which isprobably why Roger is refusing to pay me.

My apologies also go out to **Argus Specialist Press**, whose representatives threatened me with legal action and/or severe bodily dismemberment – I didn't really mean to say anything horrible about your wonderful magazines chaps, I was of course talking about **EMAP** (at this point the editor grasps me firmly round the windpipe. As I feel the life-force draining from my limbs I manage to scrawl ONLY JOKING PEOPLE, I LOVE YOU ALL)!

THE CRASH SANDINISTAS STRIKE A BLOW IN THE CITADEL OF CAPITALISM

Or, to put it another way, this month's report comes to you direct frm the Ritz Hotel in Picadilly, London. Unfortunately this does not mean that CRASH has seen the light and started treating its reviewers with the respect they deserve – we'd be lucky to get a room in the Red Cow in Ludlow. It means tat I went along to the 'most prestigious award for amateur programmers' ceremony, the **Cambridge Award**. Funnily enough, I've only recently reviewed last year's winner and runner-up, *Battle 1917* and *War 70*, so I thought I had an idea of what to expect; but in the event I was pleasantly surprised. There were four 'finalist' games, which I've reviewed below. They can all be loosely described as 'strategy' games. But first I must tell you a little about the actual event itself, since I feel morally obliged under the freeloaders' code of honour.

As I entered the Ritz in my rainbow-striped jumper and my hardware jeans, I sensed that something was not quite right – why wasn't I being thrown out on my ear for not wearing a tie? Well, apparently if you are going to a private function then you don't have to. Great, I thought; let's just head straight for the bar in my usual manner. Having located the 'Marie Antoinette' suite, I made the mistake of asking the barman for a drink. I say mistake because th man was fairly well blasted by the time I arrived and he could only understand the kind of 'tourist' French that the waiters *oll heff to spik*. (Was he on a percentage from Beefeater?) Anyway, I got a gin big enough to farm salmon in, topped up with about two millimetres oftonic water. Now I'm not actually that keen on neat gin, so I asked one of the floating French penguins to fetch mea bitter lemon so that I could mix it with the half-pint of gin. A minute later he returned with a slice of lemon on a stick: 'Your beet urv limon monsieur, ' he said!

Things went from bad to worse. RUSSELL AND Carol from *White Dwarf* arrived, already half cut, and pounced on a QL chap, hoping to have a meaningful discussion about artificial intelligence. The man was so scared he ran away. The waiters wrested our half-empty glasses from our hands and topped them up with yet more neat gin. By now I had started to acquire a taste for neat gin, and when I was accosted by the Argus heavies I was able to fend them off with a bottle of (yes, you guessed it) gin. Julian Fuller from Micronet got very earnest with a man from Telecom about Multi-User Dungeon. I think that if ever a nuclear war is imminent I shall book myself into the Ritz, because it's the only place Iknow where you can get drunk in under eight minutes without even trying!

Then the buffet lunch arrived, consisting of a load of raw, minced meat on what looked like pieces of Ryvita (I have since larned that this is in fact a great deicacy known as 'Steak Diane') and some kind of Scampi – or was it Pork Balls? (The kind you get at a Chinese take-away, I mean!) Then the speeches began, greeted with thunderous applause. The sponsors of the awards were **C. C. S.**, *Sinclair User* magazine and **Sinclair Research Ltd.** I think that most of us who'd managed to stay sober were hoping to have a word with Sir Clive about his plans for world domination and whether we'd be able to buy shares in Sinclair in 1985 (ha-ha). But alas, it was not to be because he didn't show up. Instead we had to make do with **Nigel Searle** who is (only) the Managing Director. He spoke about how Sinclair had been responsible for getting computing off the ground in the U. K. , and how pleased they all were to be British and all that sort of thing. My associates Russell and Carol kept making distinctly negative comments at particularly high volume, which made one feel slightly conspicuous. The Chairman of **C. C. S.** made a rather rambling speech and seemed a little overwhelmed by the whole situation; but then, if he had drunk as much as I had then I wouldn't be at all surprised. **John Gilbert** of *Sinclair User* made a punchy but totally vaccuous speech about what a brilliant magazine he works for. **John Sherry**from Keele received the award from Nigel Searle for his program *The Prince*, and looked understandably pleased with himself since he'd just won £2, 000.

THE PRINCE

Author: **John Sherry**
Producer: **C. C. S.**
Retail price: **£7.95**

The **1984 Cambridge Award Winner**:This is a very complex program for four players which actually demands quite a lot of thought from the participants. It is reminiscent of the board



TLINE

game 'Diplomacy' in that it provides a vast amount of scope for inter-player negotiations. The game is based on Machiavelli's classic chronicle of Renaissance intrigue ('The Prince') and the task is to retrieve a secret object and word and present them to the Prince in order tobecome his chief adviser. Each of the players has a character on the screen who holds a certain measure of power; fo example, Porcus the Merchant can lend money to other characters, while Brother Ambrose can dispense grace. The Prince will refuse to see anyone who has too many sins outstanding, and it's well nigh impossible toavoid committing the occasional sin along the way, such as sending out your henchman to'hit' another player, or even stealing the objects themselves. Each player has a spy and a thug to help him collect information and hamper his rivals' efforts, but as there is only an initial selection of six of each type, the chances of your men being double agents isvery high.
The other players are required to leave the room while you take your turn on the keyboard, and you can leave phony messages around the castle for them, steal their ladders as well as all sorts of other devious tricks. Also, the opportunities for off-screen disinformation are enormous. But one of the problems with the game is that I feel it's unreasonable to expect th players to maintain the pretence and secrecy for the amount of time it takes to play. One feature of the game, for instance, is being rendered 'incommunicado' at certain points, whch means that you can't tak to the other players off-screen. Ihave my doubts as to whether this is particularly practical. Also, the command structure isonly likely to be understood byhardened adventure freaks.
But these are only minor quibbles. The graphics and character set are very neat and very fast, and the basic strength of the game as a multi-player experience should not be missed. I haven't really had time to get to grips with *The Prince* as yet because of its great complexity, not to mention the difficulty of getting four players together at the same time. But saying that, I think this one should see me through most of the winter.

Verdict:a real step forward in computer games. Makes *Sabre Wulf* look like *Atic Atac.*

INSURGENCY

Author: **Nicholas Holgate**
Producer: **C. C. S.**
Retail price: **£5.95**

I must confess that I really do not know how C. C. S. do it. One minute they put out a truly enthralling game such as *The Prince*, the next they try to foist the most awful garbage on us, like *Blue Riband*. Then they bounce back again with an excellent offering like *Insurgency*. I must confess to being totally baffled. *Insurgency* is a



two-player game of guerilla warfare in which one player is the Sandinistas, or the VC's, while th other is the usual fascist oppressor. There is a selection of 100 maps to play on and each contains a number of villages connected by roads, several areas of jungle (accessible to guerillas and army helicopters) and mountains (inaccessible to all). In each map the guerillas are being supplied from the North and the army from the South. Supplies arrive by air throughout the game, but you have to be able to collect them. The army has a wider chice of units, with armour, aircraft, artillery, trucks and medics, but the guerillas have an advantage of being able to move faster through the jungle, thus remaining out of reach.
s the game progresses each side builds up a picture of the other's position by means of intelligence reports, and then they attempt to take over villages, block roads with mines and so on. The guerillas can recruit villagers and provide them with food and arms. But the army medics can improve their helth, which helps to bring them back into the government fold.
The number of options available at any one time is amazingly high and I got really involved in running my Mujaheddin campaign. As with *The Prince*-though, the drawback is that only one player is supposed to be at the screen at any time, which stikes me as something of a contradiction when you consider that multi-player games are supposed to bring increased sociability. The graphics also leave something to be desired (although they are well up to the usual strategy game standard – which isn't very high). All in all, however, a very impressive game, and the author one to watch for the future.

Verdict:at £5.95 may be even better value than *The Prince.*



BLUE RIBAND

Author: **David Bark**
Producer: **C. C. S.**
Retail price: **£5.95**

Blue Riband after *The Prince* is going from the sublime to the ridiculous. In the game you have to pilot a large sea ferry around a number of islands in the shortest possible time without getting sunk. To assist you, you have radar, engine-room telegraph and wheel. Sounds tedious? It is.

Okay, now I know that you lot out there aren't going to be particularly worried about this, but all that stuff above was in fact written for the last issue – do I hear a collective sigh of relief from all my fans? You thought that Roger had finally staggered in from the Gay Caballero in Ludlow High Street and dismissed this pathetic excuse for a Gonzo journalist – but how wrong you were! *(Don't talk too soon, Gonzo -Ed)* **All that happened was that in my unhinged state of mind (brought on by an overdose of gin) I missed the deadline. The reason I mention this is because I very nearly missed the deadline for this issue too, on account of a close encounter with death.**

As I drove into my day job (even we famous journalists have day jobs – hyperactive Derek Brewster's got about eight!) the other day, my motorbike and I parted company on the rear wing of a black Cadillac limosine (this bit's not entirely true – it was an Austin Allegro really) which I could have sworn was being driven by one of the Argus heavies – or was it someone from Domark? Anyway, your heroic correspondent flew through the air for some distance, crash landed on a cat's eye and only narrowly missed death at the hands of at least 34 juggernauts. Meanwhile my bike was elsewhere, battered and bent. Shaken, but not stirred, I crawled over to the side of the road and duly collapsed. I awoke in hospital with the thought that I had only another twelve hours to meet the CRASH deadline, so you'll have to forgive me if some of these reviews are a little less thoughtful and caring than usual; but you know how it is – better read than dead.

ATRAM

Producer: **Websters**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£19.95**
Author; **Miles Bozeat**

Atram is billed as the 'first in a series of unique computer-aided board games' and it comes in a massive board-game type box. *Atram* stands for Advanced Tactical Reconnaissance and Attack Mission. The idea behind it is that it's a simulation of a military exercise carried out by the Royal Navy and US Marine Corps using exactly the same weapons –Carrier Harriers (or AV 8B's as the Yanks call 'em).

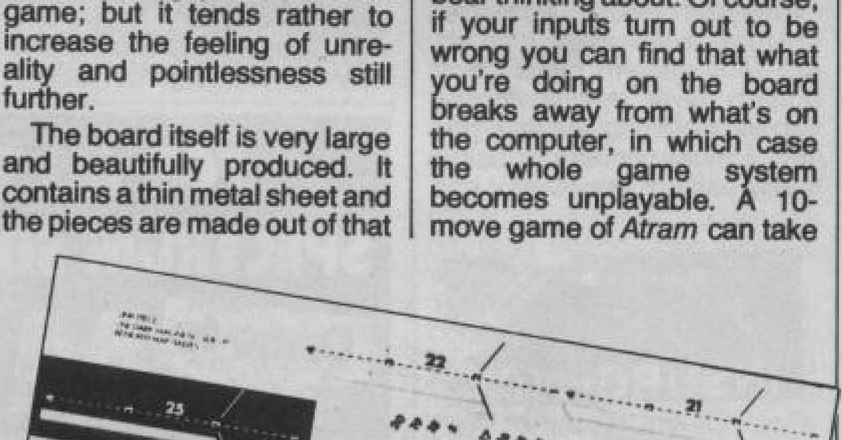
That's the author's first mistake: who wants to play a simulation of an exercise? Anyone in the games business will tell you that what the consumer wants is slaughter, blood and guts, torture, napalm, and Black Magic, with a little bit of kinky sex thrown in for the older ones. So the whole idea of the game is suspect from the start. I suspect that Miles Bozeat has done this precisely to achieve equality of forces. But any wargamer will tell you how unnecessary that is. The objectives of the game should be changed.

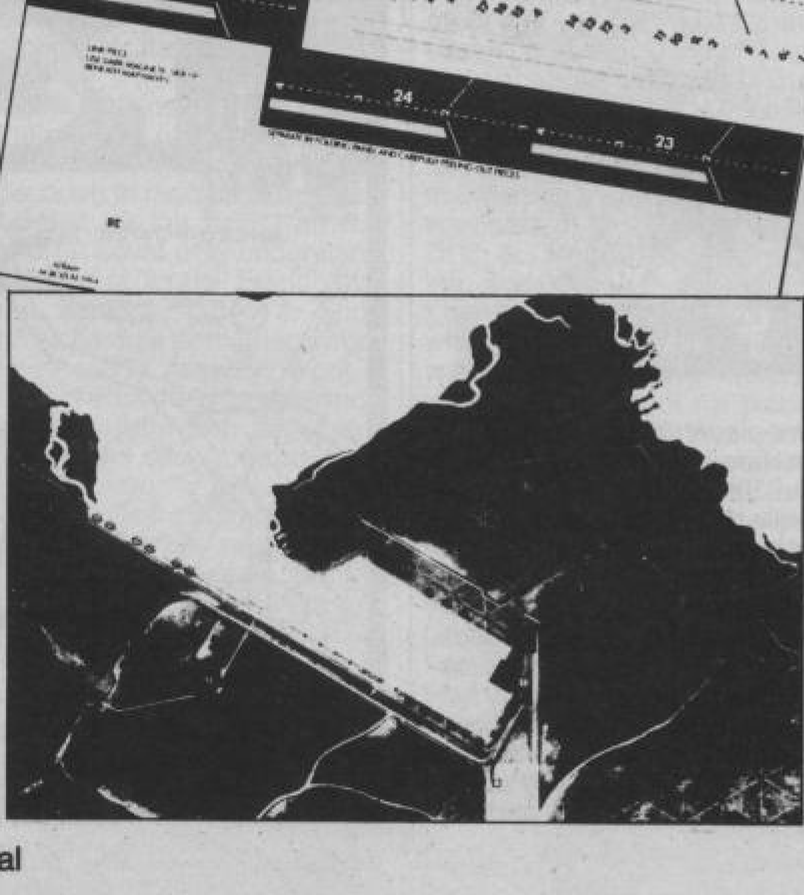
For example, in a standard Avalon-Hill type board wargame which is simulating a historic campaign, the result of the game overall may be a foregone conclusion, but the objective for the players is simply for their side to do better than actually happened in history. So, in *Russian Campaign* the Germans win if they are still holding Smolensk by June 1944. The two players' sides of the board in *Atram* are exactly the same, which again is intended to create a more equal starting position in the game; but it tends rather to increase the feeling of unreality and pointlessness still further.

The board itself is very large and beautifully produced. It contains a thin metal sheet and the pieces are made out of that sort of magnetic plastic that used to be on the back of L-plates. This strikes me as a strange presentation decision in view of the fact that magnets and tapes don't mix too well. Thus, if my *Atram* is older than a few weeks it will very likely have no program left.

When the pieces are laid out on the board the appearance is very impressive. Each side has three airfields, two carriers, five bombers, twenty fighters, five anti-aircraft batteries and five strategic targets to defend. But once you get into the actual mechanics of the game it becomes ludicrous. The computer program keeps track of the amount of fuel and weapons each unit has left, and other aspects of the unit's status. But the inputs required for each unit's movements are incredible; for example, a bombing run over an enemy airfield might require the following input to the computer: 16S4E13R2M1S2F24 ENTER.

The trouble is, that as the game progresses you find yourself having to make this kind of entry for every aircraft, and if that's 15 or more characters the amount of time it takes to make sure your fingers are correctly positioned doesn't bear thinking about. Of course, if your inputs turn out to be wrong you can find that what you're doing on the board breaks away from what's on the computer, in which case the whole game system becomes unplayable. A 10-move game of *Atram* can take upwards of five hours to play, and, frankly, I don't think that the enjoyment from the game is at all worthy of that sort of time. It's a shame really, because I like the idea of computer-aided board games, but this is definitely not one to break the mould. I understand that Webster's (distributors of Boots' software) put money into this game, in which case you'll probably see it on the shelves at Boots, if nowhere else. It's the kind of game that your Dad would probably buy you for Christmas; if I were you I'd demand the money instead.





Verdict: Nice box, shame about the game.

WARZONE

Producer: **C. C. S.**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**

This is an impressive game, certainly the best wargame that C. C. S. have released so far. Even my girlfriend liked it, so it must be good! *Warzone* is a straight battle between the blue and red armies (the computer controlling the red armies of course) over a sectored map measuring thirty units square. The player has a choice of infantry, artillery and tank units and can choose up to one hundred and fifty units in total – which is matched by the computer's side. The computer generates a new landscape for each game and deploys the units automatically.

The physical features of the map are a little on the simple side, but incorporate some nice touches such as giving longer range when firing from a hilltop. The map does not scroll, but is selected by sector – this causes some problems, as you cannot look at a sector where you do not have pieces (I suppose this may echo real-life military intelligence, but it can be very frustrating) and you also cannot fire from one sector into another, which is definitely not realistic. The program is all machine code, and responds fast, though I greately prefer the cursor selection type of piece movement to the 'J3 to H6' type of input as found in *Warzone*.

Verdict: the second best computer wargame I've ever seen.

Next month (when I've got my company car!) we should have a couple more from C.C.S. Happy Christmas.

fantasy SOFTWARE

The battle could be yours.....
.....but it won't be easy!



This is 'ZIGGY', shown above, in his exploratory capsule and is a true representation of the on-screen graphics.

THE PYRAMID

THE PYRAMID is an arcade style game which has a very adventurous feel to it.

The Pyramid contains 120 chambers on 15 levels. In order to get from one chamber to another you must fight off the indigenous aliens to collect an energised crystal which will neutralize the force field guarding the two exits.

The Pyramid is inhabited by a total of 60 weird and exotic alien types, all of which are beautifully animated. You will meet a whole variety of demons, droids, insects and monsters, with a sprinkling of the more unusual, the extra-terrestrial tweezers, galactic strawberry, cosmic claw, mutant eye, plus a whole host of entities that defy rational description. You'll no doubt invent your own nicknames.

You proceed to explore the pyramid from top to bottom with the difficulty generally increasing with the depth of level. Depending on the choice of exit from each chamber you are likely to have a different game every time you play.

Apart from the challenge of trying to achieve the highest score possible the pyramid contains a number puzzle to solve. The more chambers you successfully visit the more information is gathered to enable you to discover the secret numbers of the pyramid. The puzzle won't take you days to solve, it will probably take you a few months.

DOOMSDAY CASTLE

DOOMSDAY CASTLE consists of a labyrinth of 74 complexly inter-connected Halls and Passages where you will meet a whole host of adversaries serving the infinitely evil Scarthax, the Garthrogs, the Orphacs, the phenomenally nasty Googly Bird and the Urks which manifest themselves in over fifty unbelievably weird and wonderful guises.

Scarthax has scoured the Universe to bring together the six ancient stones of lifeforce. United in Doomsday Castle they are being used to wield an irresistable power over the cosmos, emanating waves of corruption through every galaxy.

To save the Universe, you must battle your way through the Castle to find and collect the six stones and use their force against Scarthax to destroy Doomsday Castle, hopefully escaping yourself before the final cataclysmic explosion.

The task is not easy (saving the Universe never is!) and it will take you many games to unfold the structure of Doomsday Castle and discover the locations of the ancient stones.

The addictive arcade style action will keep you coming back to play but the overall challenge should still keep you occupied for months.

FANTASY SOFTWARE is available from W.H.SMITHS, JOHN MENZIES, BOOTS, LASKYS, GREENS, RUMBELOWS, SPECTRUM GROUP, COMPUTERS FOR ALL and all other good software retailers.

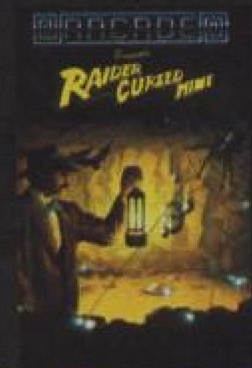
The Pyramid at £5.50 and Doomsday Castle at £6.50 from

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A
Fast-furious racing in this Arcade game for the Spectrum. 'Pontoon' on side B free!



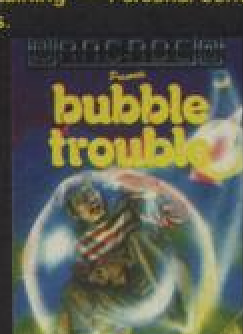
B
Funny goings-on deep in a mine. Can you escape the evil in its depths? "Original and fun . . . dexterity needed . . . . strategy is also involved" — Games Computing.



C
Defuse a bomb hidden on the complex planet, Lattica, before it blows!! ". . . action packed game . . . addictive" — Sinclair user.



D
The mobs out to get ya' in this no-holds-barred 25 screen, action-packed game. "Tricky and highly entertaining" — Personal Computing News.



E
50 different screens of mayhem. "A fun game for all ages . . . . which I thoroughly enjoyed." — Home Computing Weekly.

F *The Prize* Your mission to discover the innermost chamber of Midas in a huge planetary maze. If successful you could be in with a chance of winning up to £5000! Only the strongest will survive the devious traps set by the guardians, but just imagine what you could do with the *prize*. . . . .

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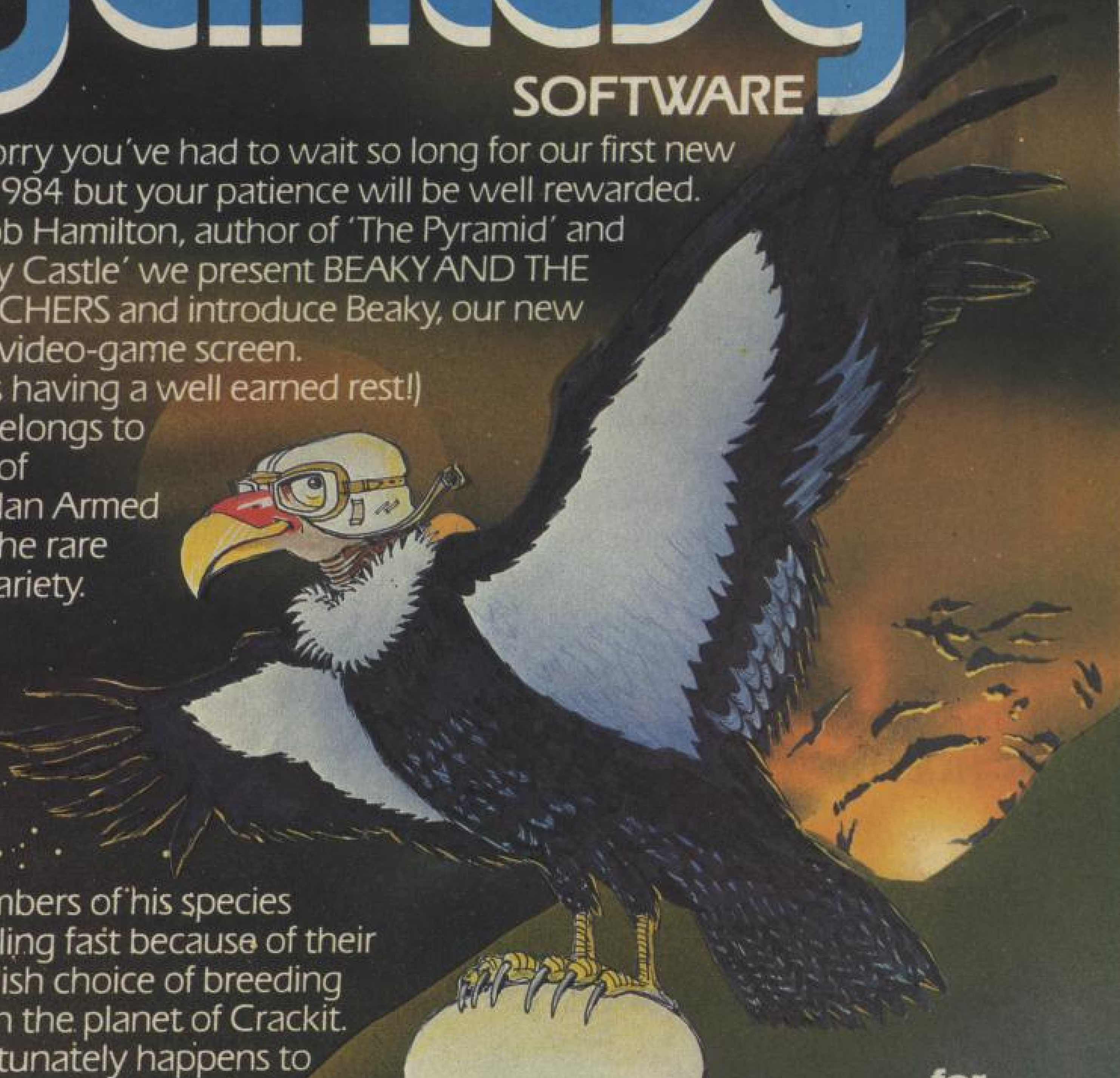
fantasy SOFTWARE

We're sorry you've had to wait so long for our first new release of 1984 but your patience will be well rewarded.

From Bob Hamilton, author of 'The Pyramid' and 'Doomsday Castle' we present BEAKY AND THE EGGSNATCHERS and introduce Beaky, our new star of the video-game screen.

(Ziggy is having a well earned rest!)

Beaky belongs to the family of Andromedan Armed Condors, the rare goggled variety.



The numbers of his species are dwindling fast because of their rather foolish choice of breeding ground, on the planet of Crackit. This unfortunately happens to be the home of a particularly evil band of creatures known collectively as the Eggsnatchers. Their sole malicious intent in life is to extinctify Beaky's species by stealing or destroying the eggs by any foul means available.

BEAKY and the Egg Snatchers

for Spectrum 48K and Commodore 64

Your objective is to try and brood, hatch out and rear as many little Beakys as possible through 12 different screens of formidable but delightful arcade action.

FANTASY SOFTWARE is available from W.H.SMITHS, JOHN MENZIES, BOOTS, WOOLWORTHS, LASKYS, GREENS, RUMBELLOWS, SPECTRUM GROUP and all other good software retailers.

Beaky and the Eggsnatchers is available for 48K Spectrum and Commodore 64 at £6.50 on cassette or on disk for the Commodore 64 at £9.50 from

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20 GAMES AND 10 UTILITIES TO BE WON!!



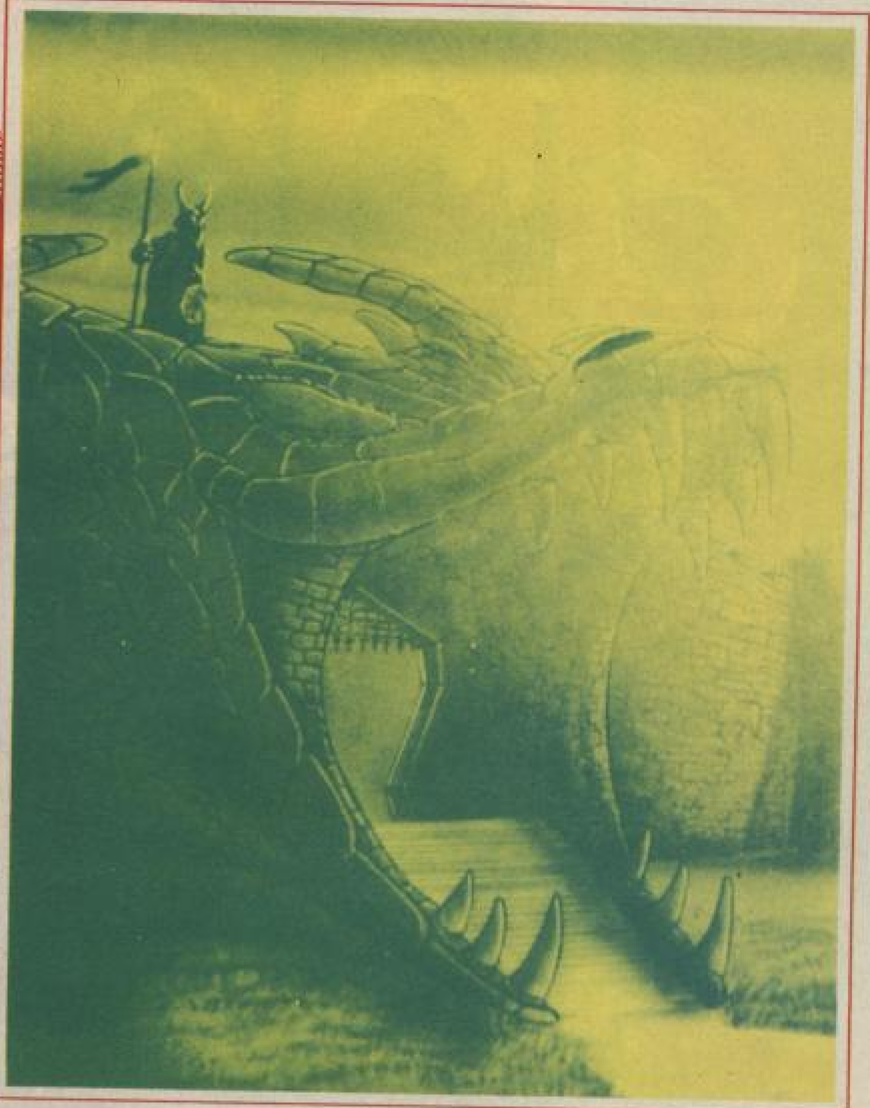
Here's a chance to win the complementary graphics utility to GILSOFT'S amazing *THE QUILL*. We have 10 copies of *THE ILLUSTRATOR* and 10 copies each of the two latest adventure releases, *MADCAP MANOR* and *THE HOLLOW* to give away!



The Quill has undoubtedly proved to be one of the most successful utilities ever written, allowing anyone with the imagination to write machine code adventures, but its graphics capability is very limited. Now GILSOFT have released a new program to enhance *The Quill*. *The Illustrator* is intended to be used with *The Quill* to provide full scale graphics for Quilled adventures. *Madcap Manor* and *The Hollow* are two more Quilled adventures in the tradition of the Gold Collection. *Madcap Manor* is by the duo of Paul Styles and Brian Jenkinson, who wrote *Mindbender*, and *The Hollow* is from the quill of Tom Davis who was responsible for Gilsoft's devious *Africa Gardens*.

10 lucky people will each win these three programs from GILSOFT, and to have a chance of doing so, CRASH has devised a wholly original type of competition, one that is so difficult, only a truly clever adventurer could possibly undertake it. Below are two pictures which look identical (sounds familiar), but they're not quite the same. Examine the pictures (from Madcap Manor) and you may spot 10 differences between them. Circle the differences in biro on the picture in the form (or photocopy it if you prefer), fill in the details and send it to: GILSOFT COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. Entries must reach us no later than first post January 18 1985

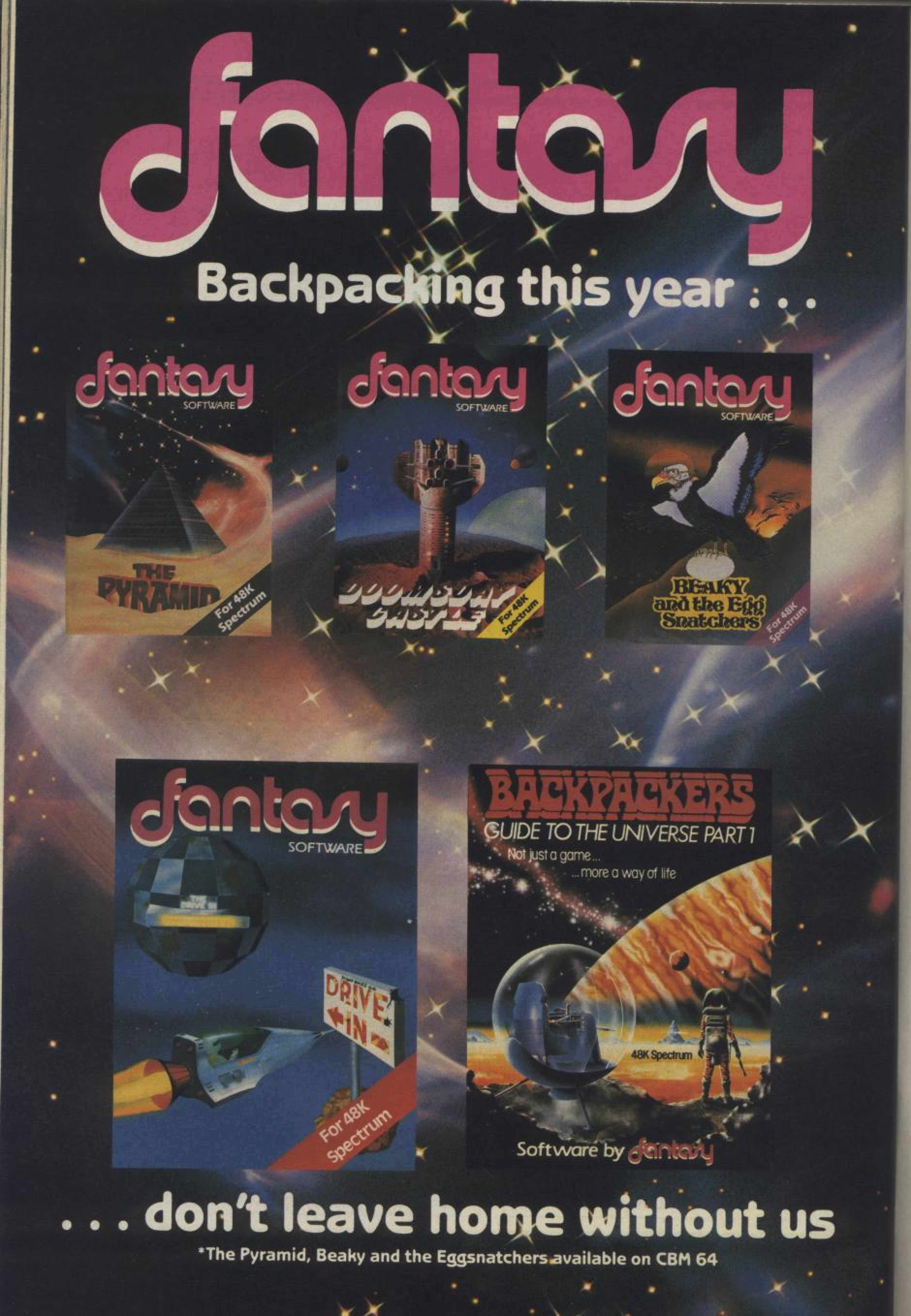




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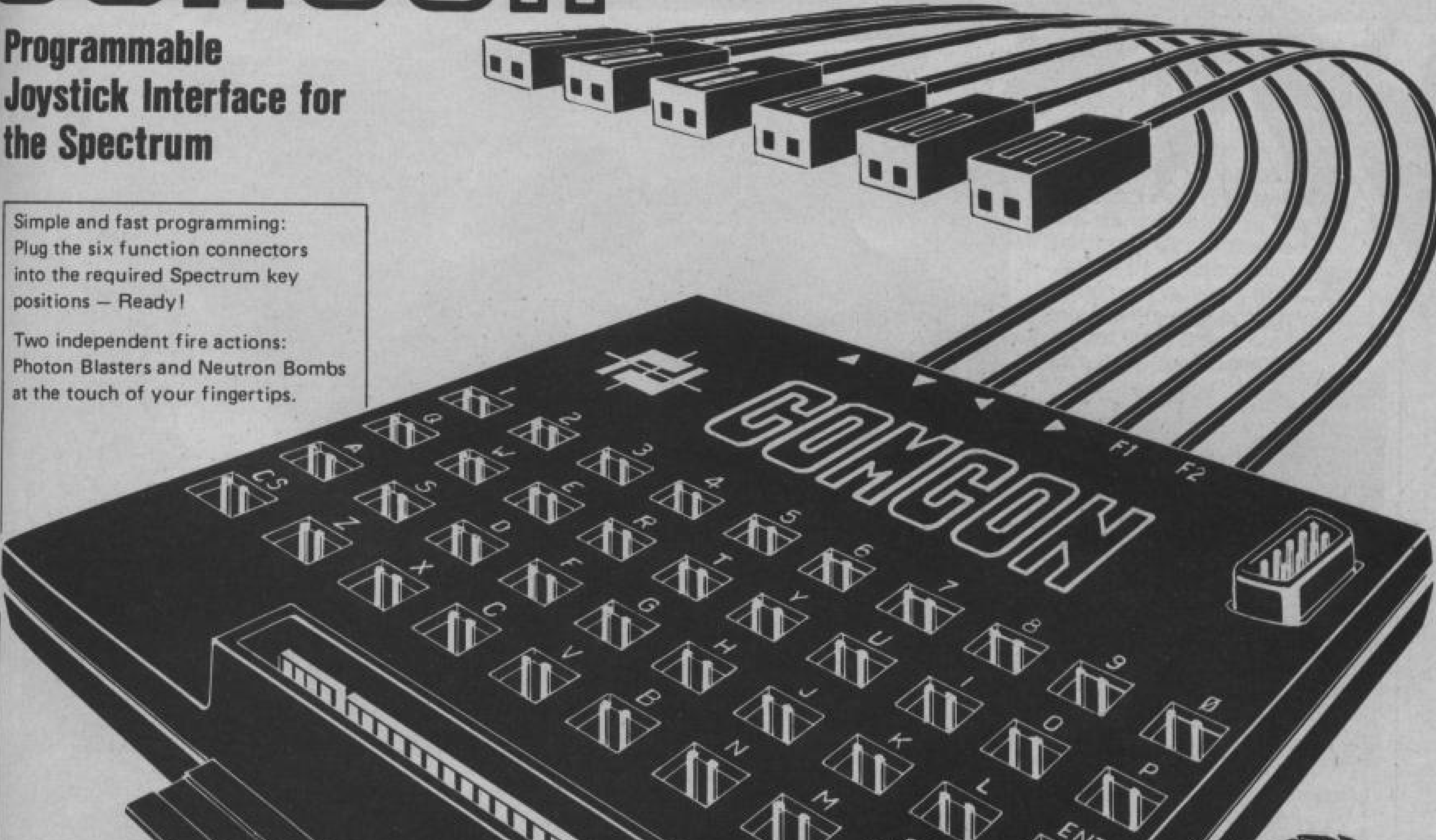





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Backpacking this year : . .
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THE PYRAMID
For 48K Spectrum
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DOOMSDAY CASTLE
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BEAKY and the Egg Snatchers
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DRIVE IN
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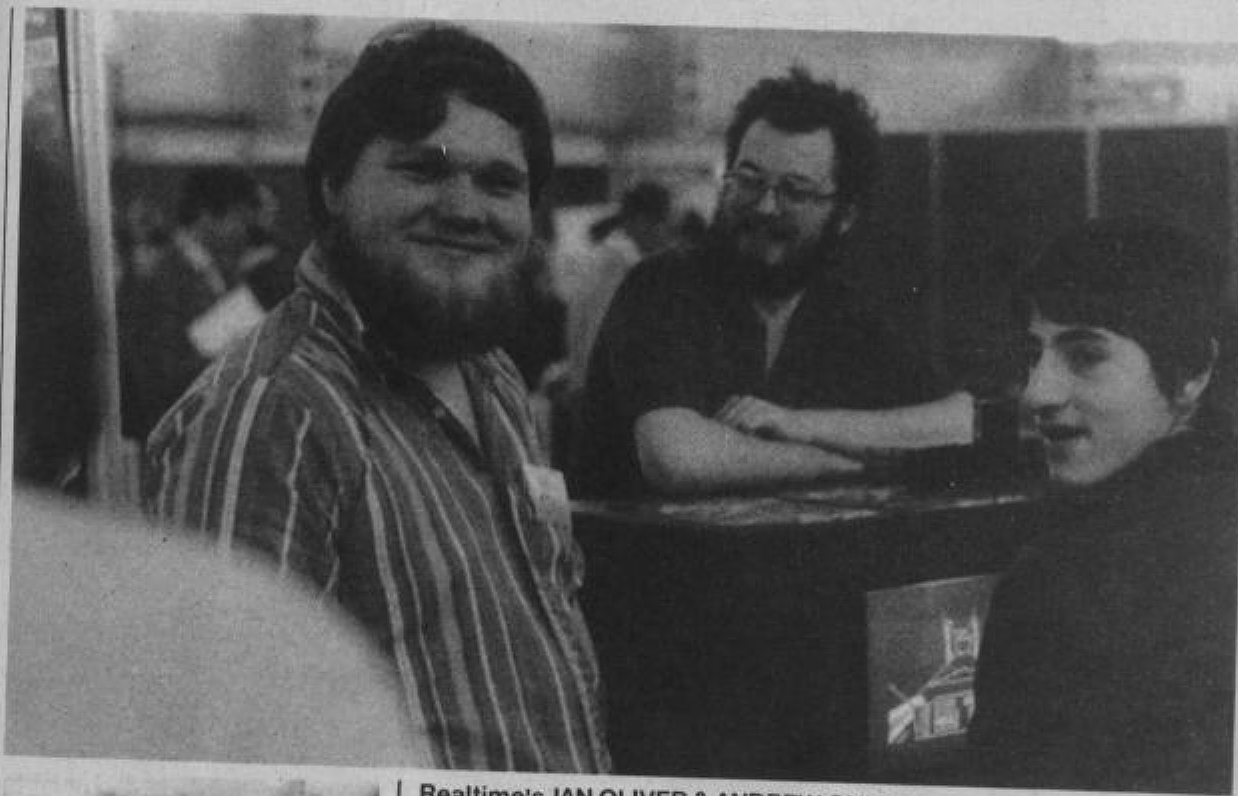
KERRASH! N·E·W·S





THE 14TH ZX MICROFAIR

THE 14TH ZX MICROFAIR was held at Ally Pally on the weekend of 17/18th November.
There was initially a threat of it being overshadowed by the **MICROMARKET** which originally was scheduled to be held at Ally Pally, but was then moved to the Wembley Conference Centre. The result was a very poor attendance in Wembley and the usual crowd gathering at the **ZX FAIR**–old habits die slowly (which should please Mike Johnston the organiser). Less positive was the line-up of software houses. Very few of the biggies showed up, most stands being occupied by high street dealers and smaller software houses. Amongst the noteworthy exceptions were **DK'tronics** with their usual 5th Avenue stand, **Automata** with their entertaining fairground activities, **Fantasy, Microsphere** and **CCS. Fantasy** were displaying their latest hit **Backpackers Guide to the Universe**, priced at £7.50, which has generated hefty sales figures within the first week of its launch, as **Fantasy** boss Paul Dyer told me with pleasure. Also just recently out is **Drive In**, which is another shoot'em up space arcade game selling at £5.50. **CCS** have no less than 12 new titles lined up. **The Prince** is a role playing strategy game which has won the Cambridge Award. It costs £7.95. Other strategy games all priced at £5.95 are **War Zone, Superpower, Air Defence** and **Insurgency. Blue Ribandis** an arcade style strategy game, while **Barrow Questand Mission 1942** cater for the adventure players, again at £5.95 each. **Tomb of Akhenaten** and **Nuke Lear** are further games in the 'Charlie Charlie Sugar' budget range and are both arcade games costing £2.99 each. **Realtime Softwares** stand was being run over by arcade freaks trying to get a go at **Starstrike**, the ultimate Star War game with excellent 3D-graphics (price £5.95).' We are being flooded with mail orders and distributor enquiries'**Realtime Softwares** Andrew Onions said elated. Softstone was making itself heard above the din of the crowd with the excellent tune of **Fahrenheit 3000**written by **Perfection softwares** Timothy Williams. A sequel is already in preparation. **Odyssey 1, Force Fighterand Turtle Timewarp** are now being marketed as budget games for £2.99 each. Also available from **Softstone** is **American**


Realtime's IAN OLIVER & ANDREW ONIONS


ANDREW ONIONS

Football at £6.95 and **Word Seeker** and **Super Bandit** as a combo for £2.99.
Softstones Tony Knight told me that two further Spectrum arcade/strategy games are being developed. One is based on the **Milk Tray** TV ad and the other on the **Dune** novel and soon to be released film, with the player being able to choose more arcade or strategy content during play.
At **Red Shifts** stand I met Chris Shafte, who has moved away from Microdealer UK to become Sales and Marketing Director of **Red Shift** and seems to be doing an excellent job of it. Just released is **City of Dead**, a role playing adventure game, and in preparation is the release of **The Tripods** based on the popular BBC series. It would appear more and more games players are turning to more intelligent and demanding strategy games and **Red Shift** has an interesting range.
Apocalypse is now available as a complete set with 14 different scenarios.
Stardreams appeared in force and were displaying their new adventure game **The Sandman Cometh**priced at £10.95, the presentation including a video ad of the game–a novel approach in this market. After their excellent adventure **Waydor** (price £7.50) **IMS Software** are already releasing **Ghoulies** (nothing to do with football), which hopefully will send you shivers down your spine (price £7.50). **William Stuart** was demonstrating his speech recognition unit with a lovely Meccano bridge crane, controlling it solely with speech commands and this above the roar of the crowd. The unit will recognise up to ten different commands at any one time, but the library of words can be extended and stored. His new product is **Lifeline**, a self analysis career counselling program, an interesting piece of software which no doubt **CRASH** will be reviewing shortly. The price is £14.95. **Microsphere** were dressed for the occasion in proper school fashion for their excellent **Skooldaze**(price £5.95). On display was also **Skyranger**, which is definitely not school material, but should nonetheless tax your intellect (price £5.95). Seeing an Act Apricot Xi at the ZX Fair is rather unusual, but upon investigation the reason becomes apparent. **Steve Betts Software** offers **Crass 80**, a Z80 assembler for the Act Apricot to produce machine code to run on the Spectrum with a ZX Interface 1 and Microdrive or any other Z80 system with an RS 232 port. Serious machine code programmers will agree on the many advantages of assembling the code on a separate computer such as the Apricot, but required is obviously a lot of capital with an Apricot and **Crass 80**, which includes a 3.5 inch floppy disc, a microdrive cartridge and a User Manual and is priced at £95. Among the many add-on keyboards appearing on the market is the **MO184** from **Mancomp Ltd.** Costing £54.95 it has very legible keys, includes extended mode, delete and cursor keys and a numeric pad and provides space for the fully housed ZX Interface 1



N·E·W·S I·N·P

and the ZX power supply. Despite the emergence of the **Spectrum Plus**the market for add-on keyboards should continue for all the many existing Spectrum owners and for those not to keen on the soggy **Spectrum Plus** key action. Several floppy disc interfaces are already in existence for the Spectrum, but none as complete as the surprise **Timex FDD System** displayed by **Micromatic**. It offers a complete operating system with disc and communications facility for the Spectrum and at £225.00 +VAT is competitively priced. The **CP/M** upgrade option should make it an interesting proposition for small business owners. On display was also a **Spectrum keyboard upgrade**from **Timex** with excellent key travel and feel. For the assembly it is necessary to remove the glued metal keyboard mask and the rubber membrane pad from the Spectrum. The new keyboard mechanism is fitted in place and secured with screws. At £14.95 this must be the most cost effective way to improve the standard Spectrum keyboard.

The ZX Microfair may not be to everybody's liking and many in the industry believe the market has outgrown this type of a fair. The show however does give a chance to the end user of asessing the entire software and peripherals market under one roof and many newly formed software houses or peripherals manufacturers can get firsthand market experience without spending a fortune as with many other shows.

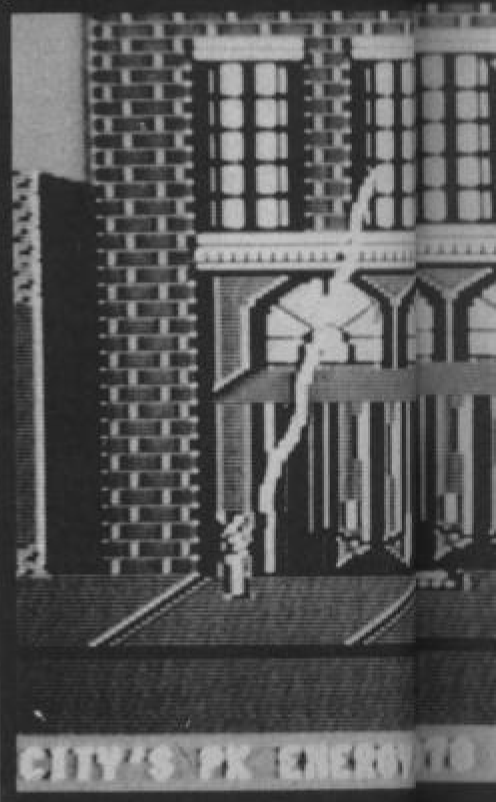




I'M AFRAID OF NO GHOSTS. . .

No doubt one of the main attractions of the Christmas holidays will be a visit to the cinema to see the new movie *Ghostbusters* – and if it isn't on your list, write it down! It opened on the 7th December at 200 cinemas, so there should be one near you. *Ghostbusters* has become one of the all time top grossers in the States, where it has even beaten the whizz kid Stephen Spielberg at the box office. The film tells the story of three off-beat parasychologists in New York who are thrown out of the university where they teach and so set up a lunatic business to fight paranormal occurrences which are plaguing the city. The ghosts come in all shapes, colours and sizes. Fortunately for business, the city is suffering a veritable plague of slimy, food-gobbling greenies, but bigger and fowler things are on the wing. The film

The Ghostbusters prepare to zap a slimy greenie – from the C64 version.



culminates in a hysterical showdown with forces from another plane which threaten the very existence of the world.

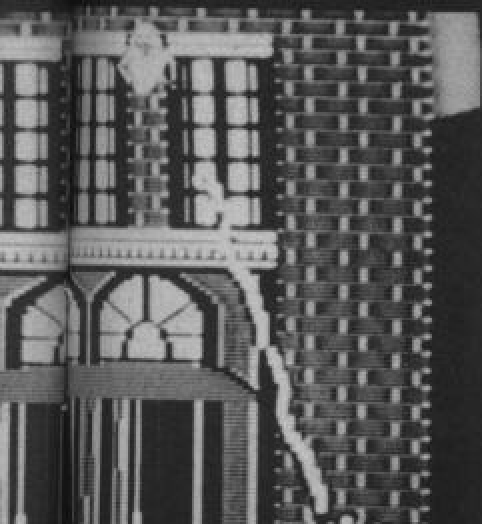
What makes *Ghostbusters* a great film is the sense of humour and the special effects.

But more unusually, this is the first time that the movie has been preceeded by the computer game. **Activision** acquired the exclusive worldwide rights to develop and market the game version of *Ghostbusters* from Columbia Pictures. **David Crane** of *Pitfall I* (and *II*) and*Decathlon* fame, has been responsible for the design of the game.

The computer game follows the story line of the film quite closely. The object is to avert a ghost invasion of New York and make sure your Ghostbusters survive long enough for the final dramatic showdown at the 'Temple of Zuul'

You have all sorts of amazing and sophisticated gadgets to help your task like Image Intensifiers, Energy Detectors, Marshmallow Sensor (The Marshmallow man is 100 feet high), Ghost Vacuum, Ghost Traps and a Laser Confinement System. It's up to you to search for, catch and store the 'slimers' and 'roamers' through the streets and buildings of New York.

Ghostbusters for the 48K Spectrum retails at £9.99 and is also available for the CBM64.





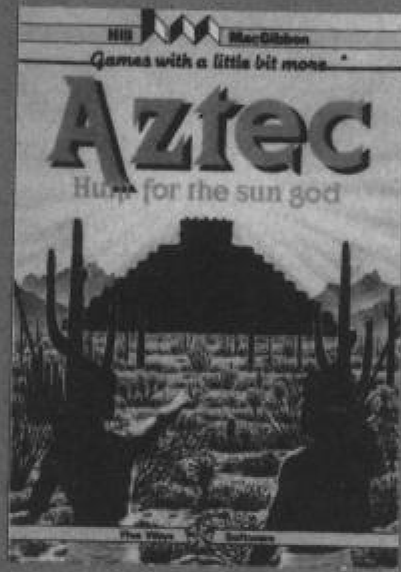
DOOMDARK'S REVENGE

Slightly later than expected, **Beyond Software's** follow up to their spectacularly successful *Lords of Midnight* has just been released at the time of writing. *Doomdark's Revenge* is as lavishly packaged in an almost identical box to its predecessor. Much too late to be able to review in this issue, a copy has been rushed to Derek Brewster, who will be giving his comments next month. Meanwhile, for those who have not yet seen it (can there be any), here is the cover to gaze upon. *Doomdark's Revenge* retails for £9.95 and is for the 48K Spectrum.

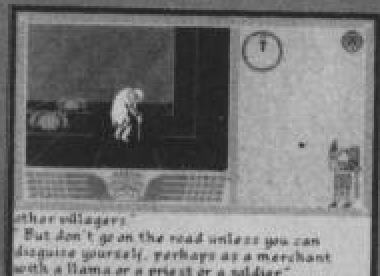
MacGIBBON'S QUEST

Two further adventure games have been launched by**Hill MacGibbon**, the company with the 'Games to stretch the mind' (sounds painful!) slogan. Both are on sale for £7.95 each. *Aztec – Hunt for the Sun God* is a mystical and complex game which challenges the adventurer to interpret a strange and disturbing dream. You wander incognito through a South American landscape of forests, cities and volcanic mountains, encountering both problems and clues along the way. The adventurer's task is to make for an unpredictable volcanic mountain, there to contend with the gods and find out what has happened to his village and strangely enough, the sun. Aztec comes complete with a full-colour poster and instruction booklet.

In*King Arthur's Quest* the player assumes the role of King Arthur, striving to free his country from the realm of an icy mist, issued by the ice-dragon. The dragon is manipulated by the evil Morgana Le Fey, and the mist is slowly bringing the entire land to its feet in a lingering, frozen despair.

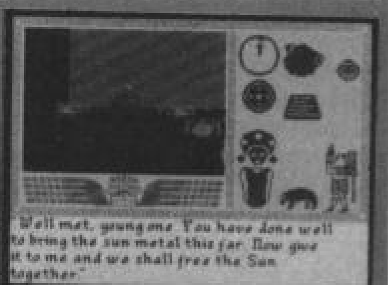


King Arthur lives up to his reputation by hacking his way past dragons, witches and unicorns and skirting over frozen lakes. There are also magic books to be ploughed through and difficult spells and secrets to overcome – all in the name of seeking clues to the location of Lancelot and Merlin. Once these two have been found Arthur can set about liberating the land from Morgana's evil spell, thus fulfilling the quest. The game includes a full-colour poster and detailed instruction booklet.









KOKOTONI WALLY

Wally Week, star of Mikro-Gen's *Automania* and *Pyjamarama* is upset by reports that he's been overtaken in the popularity stakes by arch rival **Kokotoni Wilf**. Elite Software has announced that *Kokotoni Wilf* has taken the title of best ever adventure arcade game from SP's *Jet Set Willy*. But a defiant Wally Week claims that *Pyjamarama* is better than either of these two programs and he is willing to go to the polls to prove his point. He has issued a direct challenge to Wilf by inviting CRASH readers to send in their votes and determine who is **really** the public's favourite. Yawn, that's if anyone is really bothered

Meanwhile, the ever-active **Wally** has moved into the field of motor-racing sponsorship, following his rise to computer fame. **Mikro-Gen Cars** are featuring Wally as their logo, so don't be surprised if you see him whizzing past at 100 mph in the Grand Prix at Brand's Hatch this month. But Wally hasn't got it all his own way: 'I really wanted to drive,' he laments. 'But it was felt that for the health and safety of the other drivers I should only appear in a sponsorship and advertising capacity.' Never mind, perhaps Mikro-Gen will come up with a new game featuring Wally Week on wheels. . .



Banned from driving, Wally Week and the Mikro-Gen Rally team prepare for fisticuffs with Kokotoni Wilf and his band of time travellers.

FLYING GOLD FOR HEWSON

Hewson Consultants have rewarded the talents of their microcomputer writer **Mike Male** with a gold cassette after sales of his two programs topped the 100, 000 mark.

Mike, author of *Heathrow ATC* and *Night Flite 2*, received the award from Hewson's Managing Director **Andrew Hewson**. Mike is himself an air traffic controller at London's Heathrow Airport, as well as a keen amateur pilot, and it was this experience which enabled him to bring such a convincing element of realism to his highly popular programs. It's obviously paid off too, for he has just bought a Rallye Tampico single engine light aircraft from the proceeds of his sales, which makes a change from the ubiquitous Porsche that most software people seem to drive.

A revised version of *Heathrow ATC* has been released for the 48K Spectrum featuring a Concorde landing route, enhanced graphics and help pages. On the B side is a less demanding version of the game based on landing patterns at Amsterdam's international airport.

Hewson Consultants' award-winning adventure game *Fantasia Diamond* is going Dutch. Author Topley is engaged in the complicated task of re-writing the game almost from scratch before it's available for distribution in Holland.

In the July issue of CRASH we reported that *Fantasia Diamond* had won the esteemed **Le prix du Meilleur Scenario** in France. If the game takes off in the land of tulips and Edam there could be yet more acclaim awaiting Kim Topley (and yet more money for Hewson's).

Andrew Hewson (left) presents programmer Mike Males with the gold cassette for sales of 100,000 copies of his flight and air traffic control simulations.



THE SOFT TOUCH

Softstone Ltd are looking to add yet another boost to their up and coming reputation with the release of several new games over Christmas and the New Year.

With offerings like *Turtle Timewarp*, *Odyssey 1* and *Fire Fighter* under their belts (originally marketed by **Perfection Software**), Softstone have every reason to be confident. This London-based company, originally begun in Wales, only came into operation earlier this year, but already they have progressed to become a contender in the field of micro games creating and marketing, with growing operations both at home and abroad.

Perfection Software were one of the first companies to be taken under the Softstone wing, and since then the amalgamation has gone from strength to strength.

This Christmas sees the release of *Super Bandit* and *Word Seeker*, while over the next few months several new, more sophisticated games will be prepared for general release. These will include a graphic adventure for the Commodore 64 and an arcade game based around a much-loved TV advertising sequence.

PRESENTING THE



Just in time for Christmas, **Incentive Software** are distributing a presentation gift set of the popular *Ket Trilogy* adventure classic.

The *Ket Trilogy* is a fantasy adventure in which you have to fulfill the quest and liberate Ket from Vran and his evil followers. The game gets harder the more stages you complete. Should you succeed in completing the entire mission, Incentive will label you **Britain's Best Adventurer** as well as allowing you a video recorder of their choice to the value of £400.

The cost for the gift pack – containing *The Mountains of Ket*, *The Temple of Vran* and *The Final Mission* is £12.95, a considerable saving on purchasing the games individually. Naturally, the only way to win is by scoring 100 on each game, thus revealing the three parts of Ket's secret message. An explanatory booklet on how to play is included with each game.

NEW FAST REPAIR SERVICE!

Mending a broken down computer after the guarantee has expired can be quite a headache. That's why a company called **Computer-fix** of Camberley, Surrey, has stepped in to ease worry.

Computer-fix has set up a considerable network of 500 dealers around the country, each of whom guarantees that your computer will be mended and on the go again within 48 hours of receipt.

The quick fire service is all down to **ACUMEN** (Advanced Computer Memory Tester), which can spotlight malfunctions far quicker than a skilled computer engineer, thus saving both time and money.

A spokesman for Computer-fix said that he was very pleased with the way the repair scheme was going. He described the response as 'Terrific,' with hundreds of computers being brought in for servicing daily.

Computer-fix are at Albany Park Estate, Frimley Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 2PL. Telephone 0276 66266.

CRASH will be publishing a list of the main Computer-fix dealers in the next issue.

TIME FOR BED...

Good news for all you **Zebedee** fans out there who have never quite forgiven Auntie Beeb for taking **Magic Roundabout** off the air. **C. R. L.** have issued a computer version of the popular childrens' TV programme for the Spectrum 48K.

The Magic Roundabout retails at £6.95 and features all the usual familiar characters that we know and love so well. The game revolves around the attempts of **Dougal** to construct a sugar house, while the other characters do their best to eat up the sugar cubes he requires. In the game, as in life, sugar equals energy. But don't worry folks – nobody gets killed in this game, and of course those reassuring words appear at the end: **Time for bed!**

PROTOCOL 4s RECALLED

A. G. F. Hardware have an important message for customers who may have purchased a **Protocol 4 joystick interface**: some of these have sub-specification pre-production units, which means that they have an erratic or unreliable Kempston operation mode.

If you possess a copy of the Protocol 4 Interface the way to check its reliability is to type in the following program line with the interface attached to the Spectrum. Make sure the mode switch is in the 'down' position and that you have inserted the 'Kempston' card. Then print: **IN 31** and press **ENTER**. If anything other than Ø is printed, A. G. F. will personally replace the unit free of charge. The address for returns is: A. G. F. Hardware, Freepost, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO22 9BY.

BIG C. C. S. CHRISTMAS LAUNCH

C. C. S. have released another four games for the Spectrum 48K. *Air Defence* is a wargame in which the player takes the role of Commander of Air Defences with 14 squadrons under his command. The aim is to fend off the successive waves of attack from enemy aircraft who attempt to demolish your industries and HQ. But watch out; the enemy have fighter escorts!

Superpower is a strategy game for 1-6 players, each of them running the affairs of the Intelligence Agency of a major world power. Players possess various assets in a nine-country Third World continent, and must double-deal with each other in an attempt to increase their profits from these assets using that most veritable of all weapons, political interference. The familiar ingredients of warmongering, assassination and engineering coups are at the hands of each player.

Barrowquest is an adventure game written by **John Sherry** before he came to fame with *The Prince*. The player is in a large terrain inhabited by monsters who insist on attacking him from all sides without reprieve. The only escape is when burrows appear (marked with skulls). The player can enter these burrows, which form a maze of tunnels, also inhabited by monsters. The object of the game is to locate the power gem 'Sartrak's Stone' and destroy the Black Wizard 'Grimblast'.

The Staff of Zaranol is an adventure game where the player becomes the Sorcerer's apprentice and releases an evil demon in his master's absence. The demon has to be banished before the master returns, and this can only be achieved by properly interpretating a series of clues. They are located in 45 different locations and each object has a specific purpose. Mistakes can be fatal, so you'll need to tread carefully, but there are times when speed is essential and you'll have to keep your wits about you.

All four games are on sale for £5.95 each.

C. C. S. have also released a further two games in their 'Charlie Charlie Sugar' budget range for the Spectrum 48K.

Nuke Lear is a high-speed arcade game in which you have to ensure that 'Nuke' (manager of the Radioactive Waste Depository) directs the incoming drums of radioactive waste into their allocated positions at the end of the blue roads. Nuke can change the direction of the rolling drums by climbing to one of the upper floors and standing in the way, thus illegally positioning the drum. If too many drums are illegally positioned then the radioactivity accumulates and – BANG!

Tomb of Akhenaten is an arcade action game where the player has to search the labyrinth of tunnels within a pyramid for Akhenaten's tomb. The tomb was believed to be desecrated soon after his burial, but according to the local inhabitants it's still intact and just waiting to be discovered. Spiders, poisonous asps and the 'Spirit of the Labyrinth' conspire to make your search a less than pleasant one.

Both games are available for £2.99 each.

PLUS HITS THE SHOPS

The new Spectrum+ has arrived on the shelves of **T. B. D. Computers**, the second only official distributors of Sinclair software and hardware in the country.

T. B. D. is part of one of the biggest and best record, cassette and video distributors **Terry Blood Distribution Ltd.** The Stoke-on-Trent based company is ready and waiting to deliver the Spectrum+ anywhere in Britain within 24 hours. 'We are ready to go!' comments T. B. D.'s Sales and Marketing Director **Joe Woods** enthusiastically.

The Spectrum+ (with 48K RAM) accommodates all the usual Spectrum software and peripherals and features the full function 'QL type' keyboard. Like the 48K it comes complete with a free software six-pack.

PREPARE TO DIVE!

Magasub Command is the latest release from **N. T. D. Software**, on sale for just £2.99. This is the newest in a series of popular games for the Spectrum, and features over 300 levels of machine code action.

The player assumes the role of the captain of the world's most advanced submarine – the Megasub – and the nerve-wracking object is to fend off attacks on the North Atlantic frontiers by enemy fighters and bombers. The submarine is equipped with the latest Neutron laser, but it's one of the hazards of the game that (like its deep space counterparts) the laser is prone to overheating, and it requires a cool and level-headed captain to put matters right. (That's where you come in!) Of course, if you can't stand the heat and the going gets too tough you can always crash-dive – provided there's sufficient air supply.

Megasub Command can be played via the keyboard or on any Kempston compatible joystick.

WIN A COPY OF THIS EXCITING NEW 3D SOCCER SIMULATION!!

50 LUCKY READERS CAN WIN!!



No need to worry if your home team's pitch is waterlogged or frozen over this winter – OCEAN have brought out *MATCH DAY* (retail price £7.95), a 3D soccer simulation arcade game that you can play in the comfort of your own home.

***MATCH DAY* features animated players, a marked out soccer pitch and bouncing ball. The camera scans the action from a bird's-eye-view, so you have no trouble positioning your team. The game can be played versus the computer, or as a knock-out competition for up to eight players, each with his or her own team. All the skills of dribbling, tackling, passing, heading and trapping can be performed, and the fixture can be either a single match or a lengthy cup competition. Extra-time facilities are available should a match end up in a draw. The accompanying music is from the BBC TV programme 'Match of the Day'.**

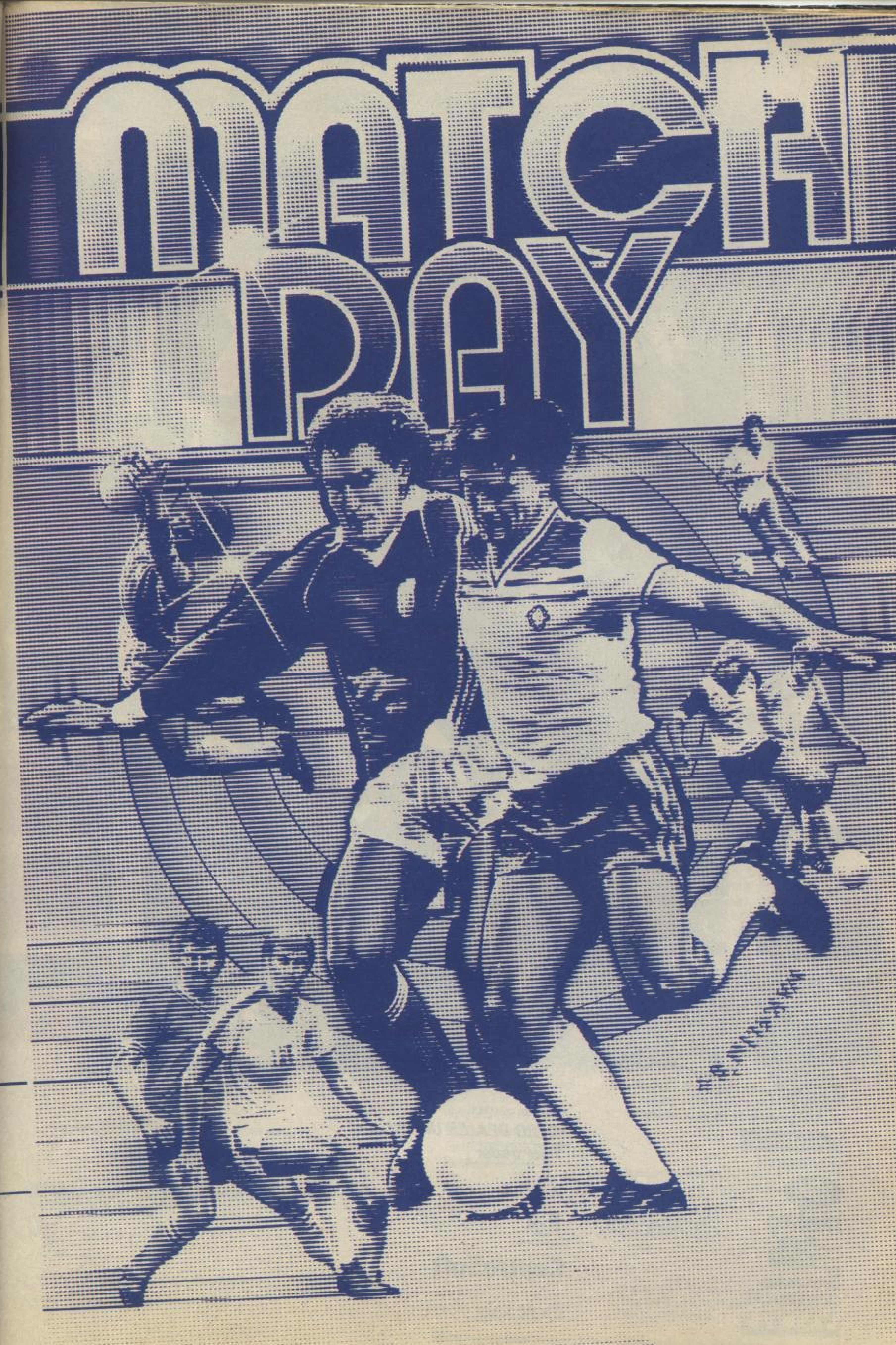
CRASH is offering **50 copies of *Match Day*** to the first 50 people drawn from the bag, who correctly answer the following questions about soccer. Your answers should be written down on a postcard (or the back of a sealed envelope) and sent to: **MATCH DAY COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than first post **January 18 1985**, and please don't forget to include your name and address on a postcard!

MATCH DAY COMPETITION

1. Which Football League club plays at Elland Road?
2. What is the name of the controversial ex-manager of Manchester United?
3. Who presents 'Match of the Day' on BBC1?
4. Birmingham is the home of Birmingham City FC. But which other midland club also has its home in the second city?
5. Can you name the manager of Liverpool before Fagan?

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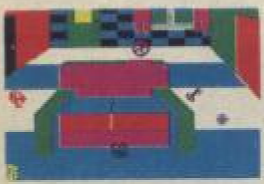
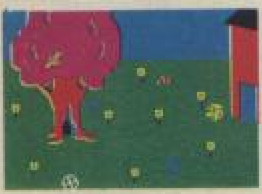


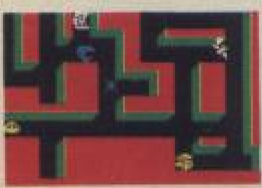
SO THIS IS WHY WILLIE HAS HIS HEAD DOWN THE PAN!

GODS BEST YET!

48K Spectrum 7.95 CBM 64 8.95

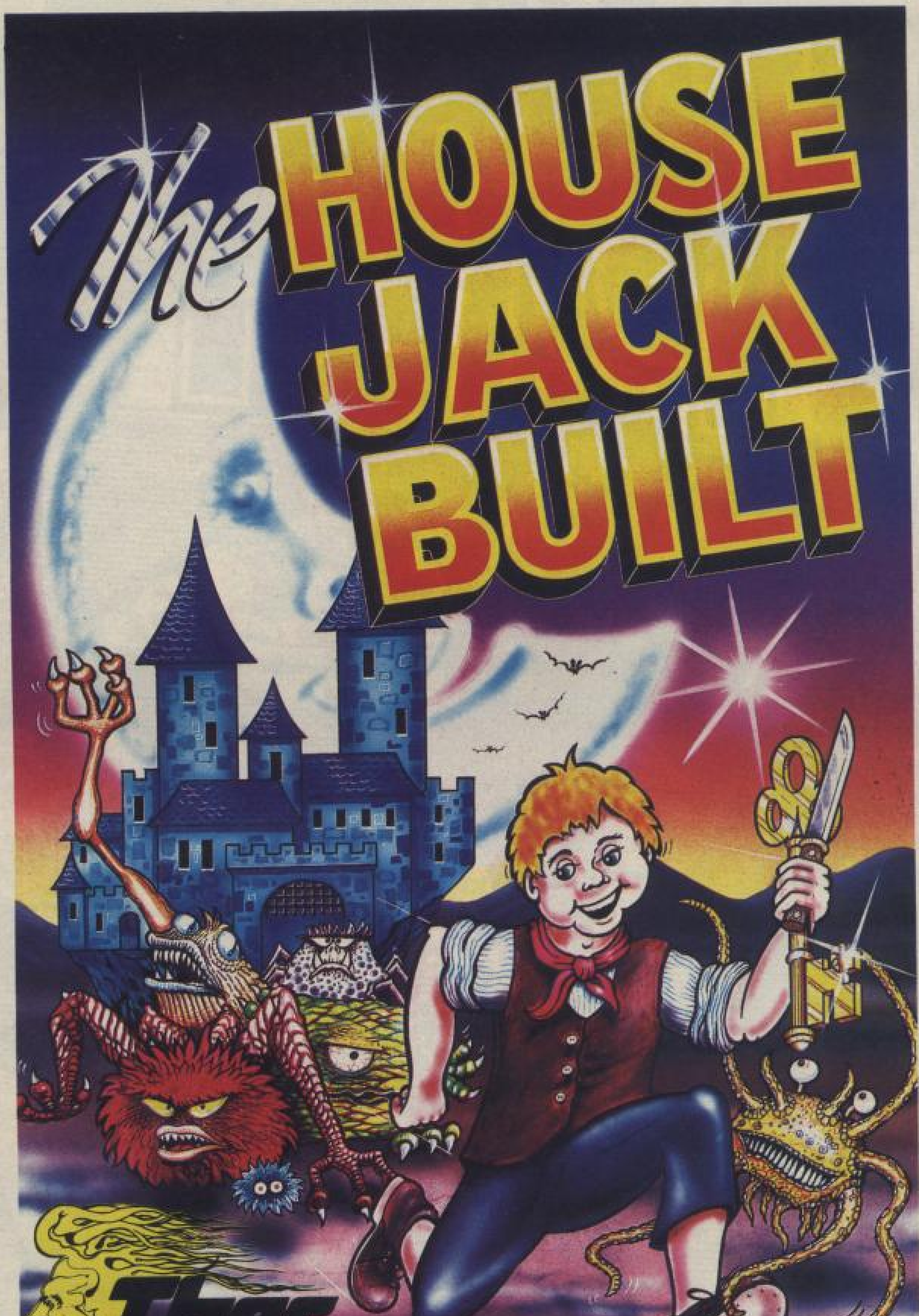
19 HIRES SCREENS FOR YOU TO ROAM AROUND IN JACKS MAD HOUSE

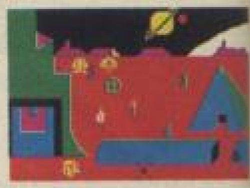





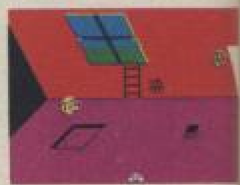












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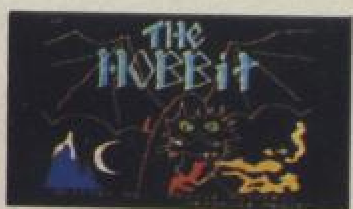
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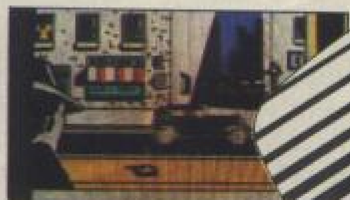
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CRASH1

UPDATE:
Cross was almost there, he'd found the fuel cells he needed, he knew where the big ship was hidden and he had the time to get there, rescue his passengers and get them away back to Earth. But then there was Karrian. . .

THE TERMINAL MAN





STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


WE'VE MISSED THE GROUND...
—BUT WE CAN'T MISS THE BUILDINGS!
WELCOME BACK... WE MISSED YOU.
YES... YOU NEARLY DID... FIND THE CATHEDRAL— WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT...
—BUT THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE FIRST...
PULL UP BY THE ALTAR...
START LOADING THE FUEL CELLS IN THAT 'SACRIFICE' CHAMBER — YOU'LL FIND THEY FIT IN THE WALL SLOTS...
WHAT..?
BUT..?
NO QUESTIONS! JUST DO IT! THERE'S NOT TIME!
VILGARRE WILL BE HERE ANY MOMENT AND THERE IS MUCH TO DO.
UNDER CROSS' HANDS THE SOLID TOP OF THE PLINTH REVEALED A BANK OF CONTROLS AND...
CELLS ALL LOADED, CROSS.
DAMN! PRIMARY IGNITION IS REMOTE — NOW CAN I...?
BUT AT THAT MOMENT—
I DON'T CALL THIS MUCH OF A BARGAIN, CROSS! YOU PROMISED TO BRING ME A SHIP! IS THAT FLYING CART WHAT YOU CALL A SHIP?



Continued on page 191

EXPLORING THE SENSE OF SOUND!

3 Channel Sound Synthesizer



Any microcomputer is capable of manufacturing sound, however in order to produce a single octave 'C' note with a frequency of 8372 Hz the signal needs attention over 16,000 times per second.

To produce software capable of performing just this one task would be difficult if not impossible, especially when you consider that to produce arcade type sound effects require even greater attention.

The production of these sounds effects without the constant attention of the processor is now possible thanks to the AY Sound Chip, its flexibility makes it essential for a wide range of applications including music synthesis and sound effects generation, continuing the monitoring and production of sound after the initial command. More often than not realistic sounds require more than one effect and this function is provided by 3 independently controlled channels, as an example, compare the sound produced by the single note of C, with that produced by the chord 'C' and you will know just what I mean, likewise producing the sound of an explosion using all 3 channels gives games a totally new dimension.

Add to this the ability to alter the pitch tone and shape of the sound you have produced and it's flexibility is unlimited. In simple terms, imagine the note you have produced as a calm sea, by altering the pitch and shape you can produce waves, the top of the wave corresponds with the maximum volume and pitch of the note, which like the wave itself rises and falls.

Free Music Designer Cassette Worth £9.95

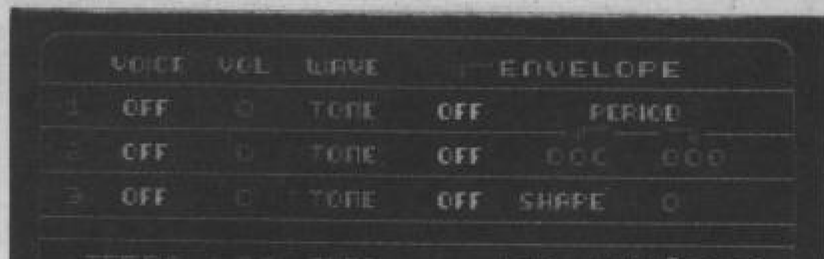
Beethoven to Bowie – Starwars to Splats.

The screen display shows all functions. Simply move the cursor along the keyboard, select the desired note by pressing the fire button and the note selected then appears on the screen.

You can vary the tempo/volume and when 'played' the notes simultaneously scroll across the screen. 10 Envelope controls mean that once created, tunes and sounds can be subtley altered given varying attack and decay times to create futuristic music and sound effects. You can record and save up to three different tunes and amend each one as necessary. The dk'tronics Sound Synthesizer is suitable for both Spectrum and Spectrum + models and is guaranteed to give you hours of fun and would make an ideal Christmas gift, you never know you might turn to be another Stevie Wonder.

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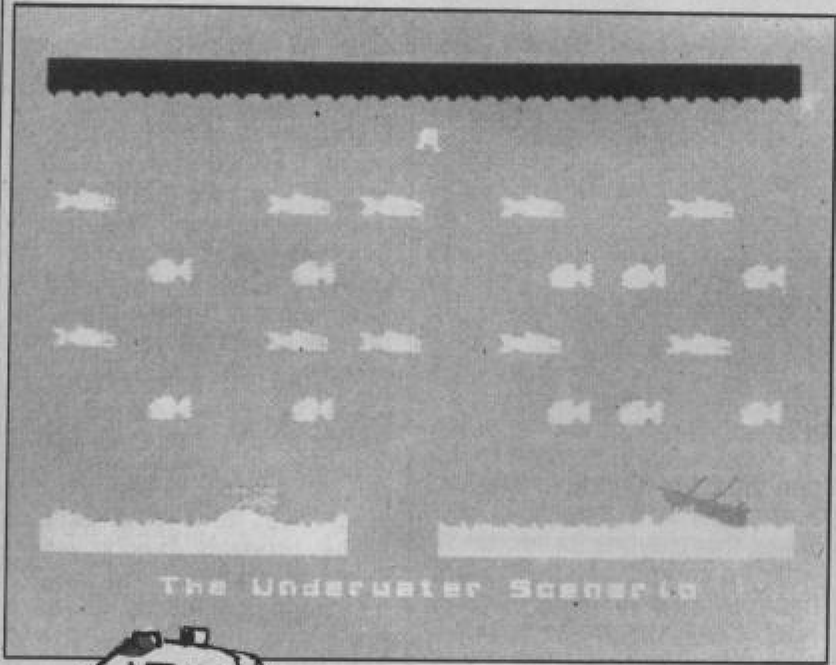
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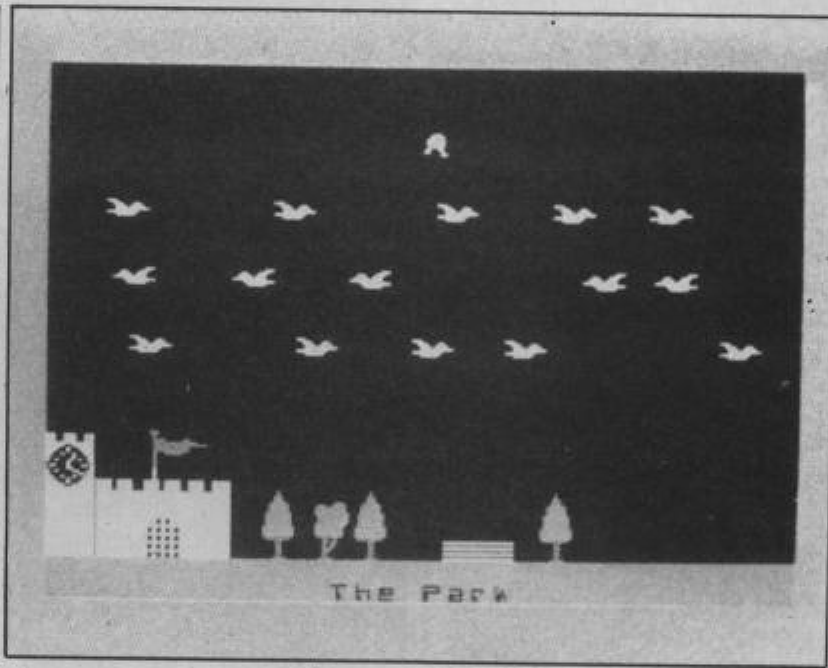
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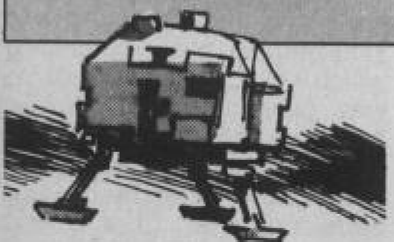
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LOONY LANDER

Producer: **Software Super Savers**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Nicholas Williams & Robert Maynard**

Loony Lander is a title that describes the game type quite well – indeed a 'Lunar Lander' game. What makes this one different is that each screen is different graphically and has different hazards for the shuttle craft to descend through. Eleven screens in all, each with a different title. On the first – The Research station, layers of clouds ba the route down to the landing pad. Then there's the Subway, with tube trains crossing from tunnels, The Oasis, Underwater Scenario, Park, Arcade Machine, Cassandra Crossing, Hell, The Worm's Hide Out, Pacman's Revenge and the Cloning factory – all make an appearance.
In every other respect, the game plays quite traditionally, with you guiding the shuttle down through the transverse hazards to land softly on a pad.

CRITICISM

● 'This is the hardest 'Lander' type game I have ever played. The ship has so much 'inertia' that control is really difficult. A challenge up to a point, but this one goes a bit beyond the point. Generally this game is average, but if you are a 'Lander' expert then try it!'

● *'The thing that makes this game fail is that you cannot respond quickly enough to the directing instructions. I'm sure that with hours of practice one could, pehaps, become quite good. The only sound is an apologetic burp when you die. Colours are bright and cheerful. The keys don't respond very well, though, and this makes naigation almost impossible.'*

● 'This game is one of the cheapies on the market produced by SSS (really Software Projects), but being cheap won't beable to sell it because the game is of extremely low quality. WHAT'S SURPRISING (and rather sad) is that the graphics in this (and some of the other SSS games) are designed to a high standard, usually smooth and quite fast with plenty ofdetail. But the real problem seems to me to be the lack of playability. It's as though the games haven't been really thught through properly. In the case of *Loony Lander*, it is almost impossible to get through the hazards – nice, therefore, to have a demo of the screens – at least you get your money's worth there.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1/2 accelerate up/down, 2/9 hover vetically/horizontally, 8/0 accelerate left/right
Joystick: none
Keyboard play: totally unresponsive, although well laid out – too many keys though,
Use of colour: above average to good
Graphics: smooth, small but effective and varied
Sound: poor
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens: 11
General rating: waste of money in the opinion of two reviewers and below average from the third.

Use of computer	**40%**
Graphics	**48%**
Playability	**34%**
Getting started	**56%**
Addictive qualities	**20%**
Value for money	**32%**
Overall	**38%**

COUNTRY COTTAGES

Producer: **Sterling Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language:
Author: **Brian James**



This is a charming strategy game for two players which brings a whiff of the countryside to your screen. The object is to buy country cottages on a bank overdraft and make money from them by renting them out to a stream of oddball characters.

Each player starts off with an overdraft facility of £100, 000, and each player takes it in turn, with a turn representing a month. The screen display shows your bank balance, value of assets, increase in assets (as land prices rise) and interest owed to the bank. It also shows what properties (if any) the players own, what tennants are in and what they are paying in rent.

With each turn a player may opt to have a look at offered properties, advertise for a tenanant, raise the rent or sell an empty property. Opting to look at something, the screen cuts to a rapidly drawn graphic of the cottage in question. There are several types in a wide price range. If the player can afford it, it goes to auction and there is a scramble between the players to secure it, with the steps going up in £200 between bids. Once a cottage is owned, it may be advertised, with the rent wanted being input. If the asking price is not too steep a tennant may arrive, usually with some other impedimenta like monkeys or cats. During a turn the rent may be raised or lowered, although putting it up too often or too much may well result in the tennant pushing off in disgust.

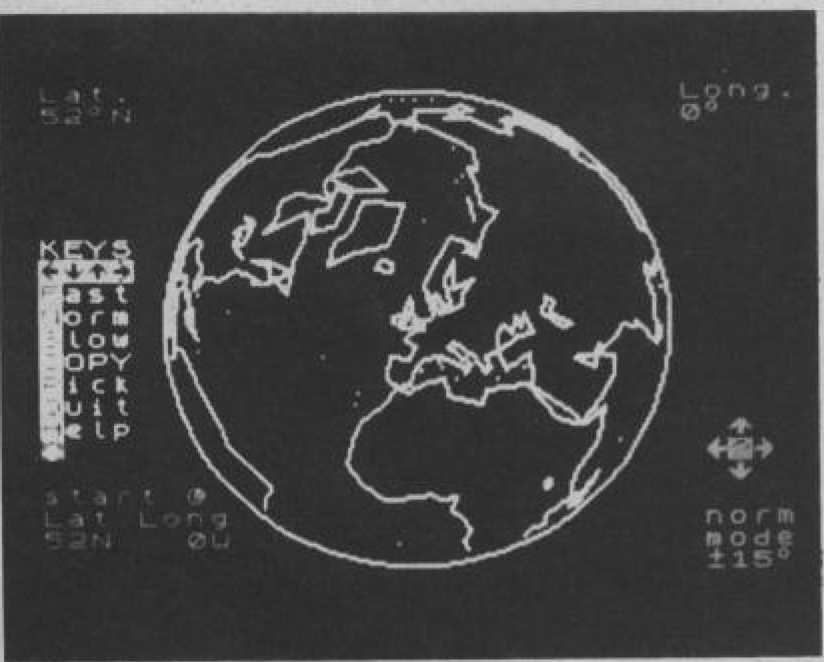
If a property is sold, the player recieves its original asking price plus the appreciation factor per month of ownership.

Aftera year's play, if a player's bank balance is satisfactory, the bank manager may increase the overdraft facility to £200, 000 and so on. The winner is the first player whose total assets first reach the pre-set target figure for a short or long game.

CRITICISM

● 'It seems quite a while since we have had one of these property buying/selling strategy games in to review. Instructions seemed to make the game quite complex, and involving to play, something which I like. Initially the game was playable, and choosing beautiful cottages seemed to be quite a task within a £100, 000 budget, given by my kind bank manager (mean, isn't he)? With my £100, 000 I was able to buy two country cottages in reasonable condition. My next task was to find tennants to occupy them – couldn't be easier, put an advert up in the local paper and suddenly two tennants came forward. What do I do now? Well, nothing really, just slowly increase the rent, and wait - yawn, boring. Ah! My kind manager has now given me £200, 000! Instantly I sprang back to life from the darkest depths of sleep and bought two more cottages, found tennants, sat and waited. Is life really so easy and uncomplicated in the buying, renting and selling market as this game portrays? I've heard about making games uncomplicated and easy to play, but Sterling Software have seemingly gone over the top and totally spoiled the playability of this one. I don't really think there's enough to keep anybody interested for any amount of time, and besides, being a two player game is already a major drawback. Lack of achievement and encouragement really does stop me from telling people to go out and buy this game.'

● *'The nicest thing about Country Cottages is the graphics of the stately residences themselves. From mean, broken down hovels to four-window lakeside bungalows, they are all neatly and colourfully drawn. The random elements which make up the names and characters of the tennats who come to view*



WORLD GLOBE

Producer: **Eclipse Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.45**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **J. M. Weightman**

A few issues back we reviewed *Space Art* by Eclipse Software, and received a number of enquiries about it. This new program uses hires graphics to draw a 3D image of the world globe as seen from outer space.

Rotation may be in any direction east/west or north/south using the cursor keys in incremental steps of 1 degree (slow), 15 degrees (Normal) or 45 degrees (Fast). The screen display shows the current latitude and longitude of the centre of the globe which is indicated by a flashing yellow box, the direction and speed of rotation and the starting point.

The program may be used in two ways by going through the Pick option to choose a start point either by latitude and longitude references, or by choosing the features list which then displays four options – Cities, Countries, Islands or Features. These four pages contain 240 locations. Choosing a location will result in the flashing cursor square being placed centrally on the chosen location, such as a country or an island, or on the discharge point of a river. The inlay card contains a print out of the pages with all the locations listed together with their reference points.

CRITICISM

● *World Globe* should make an interesting program in connection with school geography work. The hires drawings are of necessity a little on the crude side, but they do reflect the shapes of the countries well, and show the 3D foreshortening effect as continents disappear over the planet's rim quite well. Each rotational scan is redrawn, which lends a flickery aspect to it, and it would have been much nicer to have a continuous, smooth animation, but probably too expensive on memory with all the continuous line calculations being done.



them are also at work on the cottages, because although the price always matches the condition and appearance, the fine print often gives rise to mild hysteria and the feeling that an accomplished estate agent wrote it. Who, after all, would put burglar proof locks on a cottage so run down the ***buglar*** *could climb through the holes in the walls!? In fact the humour and the graphics are about it, because otherwise Country Cottages is rather limited in content and action, even with two players. I get the feeling that there's a much better game to come from Sterling along these lines and using (rare in such games) these lovely graphics.'*

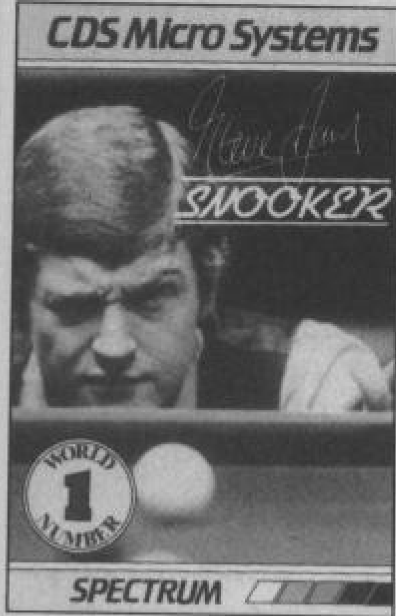
COMMENTS

Control keys: 8 keys for input with one for each player at auction time
Joystick: N/A
Keyboard play: input routine uses ENTER or Y and is very fast
Use of colour: very good on the cottages, sensible on the balance sheets
Graphics: excellent, and drawn very quickly
Sound: used usfefully
Skill levels: 9, increasing hazards to property
Lives: N/A
Screens: random landscape creation
Special features:
General rating: delightful to watch, but lacking in content.

Use of computer	72%
Graphics	79%
Playability	64%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	38%
Value for money	46%
Overall	**62%**

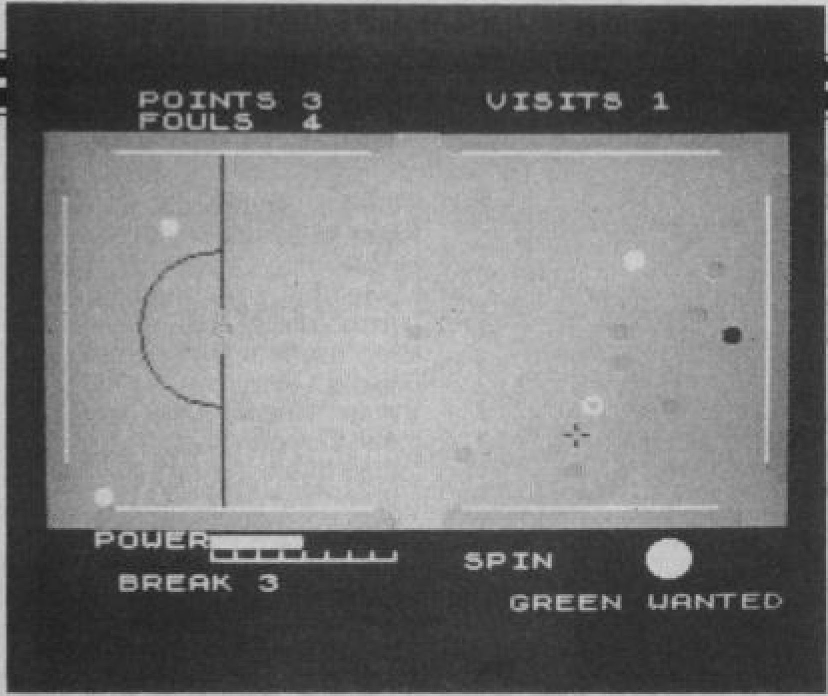
Steve Davis Snooker

Producer: **C. D. S.**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mike Lamb**



On the inlay card C. D. S. say that after the success of their *Pool*, they have spent considerable time and money in researching and developing the ultimate successor – and this is it – approved by the great man himself. They also add that they genuinely believe that their true to the ball movement is unmatchable.

Steve Davis Snooker is certainly a user-friendly program. Setting up shots and executing them has been made as fast and simple as possible, whilst still allowing a great sophistication in shot. The table size on screen is quite large, with the peripheral information kept to a minimum. Above the table, there are; points scored, fouls, and table visits. Below you will see a bar code for strength of shot, break score, spin required and colour required. In order of taking a shot, the cursor is moved to the ball at which the cue ball will be aimed. If you have just pocketed a red then nothing will happen until you have selected a colour by its score value. Once the cursor has



been satisfactorily positioned and entered, the directional keys may be used to select the strength of shot. Once that has been entered, the keys are again used to position a cursor on a large white ball below the screen – the point at which the cue will hit the cue ball and cause any spin. Entering this, also takes the shot.
The game is accessed via a large menu which allows for one or two-player games, long or short game, cursor sound on or off, Currah Speech on or off. Normal snooker rules apply, with the colours being potted in correct order after removing the last red from the table.

CRITICISM

● *'Steve Davis Snooker* is, as far as features go, probably the best snooker game about. It's also very playable with speed and spin easily controlled. My only criticism is that the coloured balls do not stand out too well. Overall, an excellent adaption of the popular game, and a worthy sequel to the C. D. S. *Pool*.'

● *'Where does Steve Davis come into this game? Did he program it? I must say that the game seems to be very realistic in the way that balls react. Some quite tricky shots can be played, only because it is realistic. The balls are of a nice size, so that there isn't too much confusion; they also move proportionately fast. Positioning of the cursor is easy and quick, often a let down in these type of games. Is it fun, you may ask? Well it will be if you're into snooker. Saying this though, I found the game enjoyable to play and I don't like snooker at all. If you want a snooker game, then I can recommend this version – a well planned game.'*

● '*Pool* from C. D. S. was, in my opinion, the best version made for the Spectrum. *Steve Davis Snooker* is a great follow up and the very best snooker simulation you can get. The inlay card's little boast is well justified. Hard work has gone into refining the process of setting up shots and the result is a joy to use. They have repeated the 'air raid' siren sound with cursor movement that was used on *Pool*, which is useful if a bit alarming (!), but it can be turned off if it gets you down. I also like the fact that the cursor doesn't move around the edge of the table, but all over it, which makes for very accurate positioning. The game plays realistically, and is generally great fun.'

COMMENTS

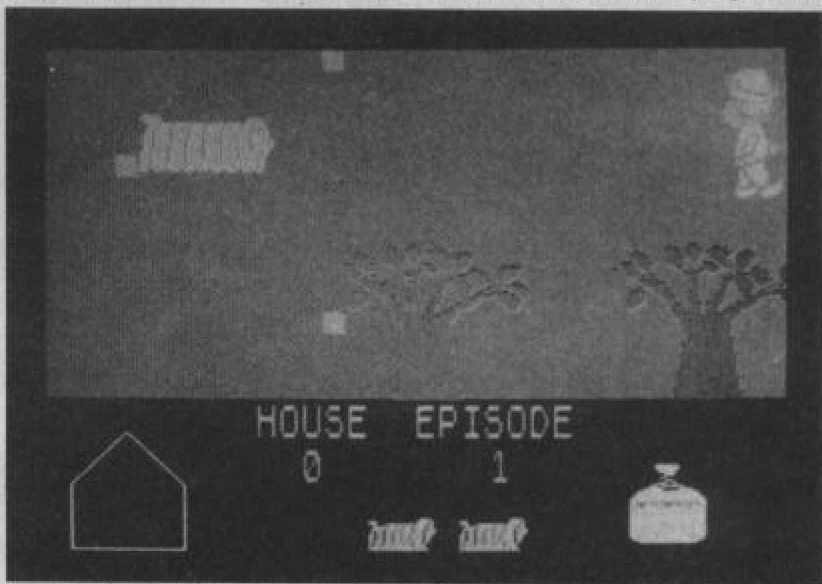
Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right and ENTER
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, AGF, Protek
Keyboard play: very responsive, simple to use
Use of colour: on the whole, very good, but yellow and green balls are a bit dubious
Graphics: excellent ball movement, generally clean and bright
Sound: useful
Skill levels: depends on opponent!
Lives: N/A
Screens: 1
Special features: Currah compatible
General rating: a very good, user-friendly simulation, which (possibly for the first time) really calls on skill

Use of computer	81%
Graphics	73%
Playability	73%
Getting started	80%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	80%
Overall	*77%*

MAGIC ROUNDABOUT

Producer: **C. R. L.**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**

There was a time when Serge Danot's 'Magic Roundabout' was almost compulsory viewing on BBC in the late afternoon. The simple stories told in that quiet, matter of fact voice just worked. With computer game versions of telly series all the rage at the moment, it comes as no surprise to see *Magic Roundabout* appearing. The title screen contains all the well known figures from the series like Brian the snail, Mr. McHenry, Basil, Florence, Zebedee and of course the hero of the piece, Dougal.
The object is to guide Dougal in his task of building a house of sugar cubes before it's time for bed. The sugar cubes dot the landscape, but the house must be built by pushing the cubes to the magic toadstool. Sugar also forms his diet (dentists take note!), and to keep his energy from falling too low, he must continually top it up with a lump.
The screen only shows a small part of the total playing area, and scrolls to keep Dougal in the middle. Apart from sugar lumps, there are the familiar red trees, and of course Dougal's other friends from the enchanted garden. If he bumps into any of his friends, however, he loses a life, and after three, it's time for bed.





CRITICISM

● 'This is a simple collect and avoid tha nasties game (yes, Florence, Brian and even old Zebedee are in the category of nasties)! The game is simple in layout, the graphics are nothing special, but young Roundabout fans will like them. *Magic Roundabout* should be in the 11s and under category.

● *'How long was it since I'd last seen these characters I asked myself? It's nice to hear about them again. The task is fairly simple in this game – just build a house from sugar lumps at the toadstool.*

Sounds easy enough, doesn't it? Well I searched and searched and could I find the toadstool before (and very quickly) all three lives had gone? All graphics are large and colourful, with the characteristic red trees planted around, and all the great names like Brian, Dylan, Ermintrude, Zebedee and Florence, who flaot effortlessly around the screen. Sound – well the Magic Roundabout theme is there, although a little broken up. Quite a child's game. I enjoyed it, but still only an average game.'

● 'The graphics are nice enough, but the game fails to recall the real atmosphere of the TV series. *Magic Roundabout* is obviously intended to appeal to children, and no doubt it will, although I think there isn't enough playability in the game. Children who use computers are remarkably sophisticated in their needs when it comes to interactive games. I also found the inlay instructions misleading, because I failed to find a toadstool or a train anywhwere – a child might give up more quickly.'

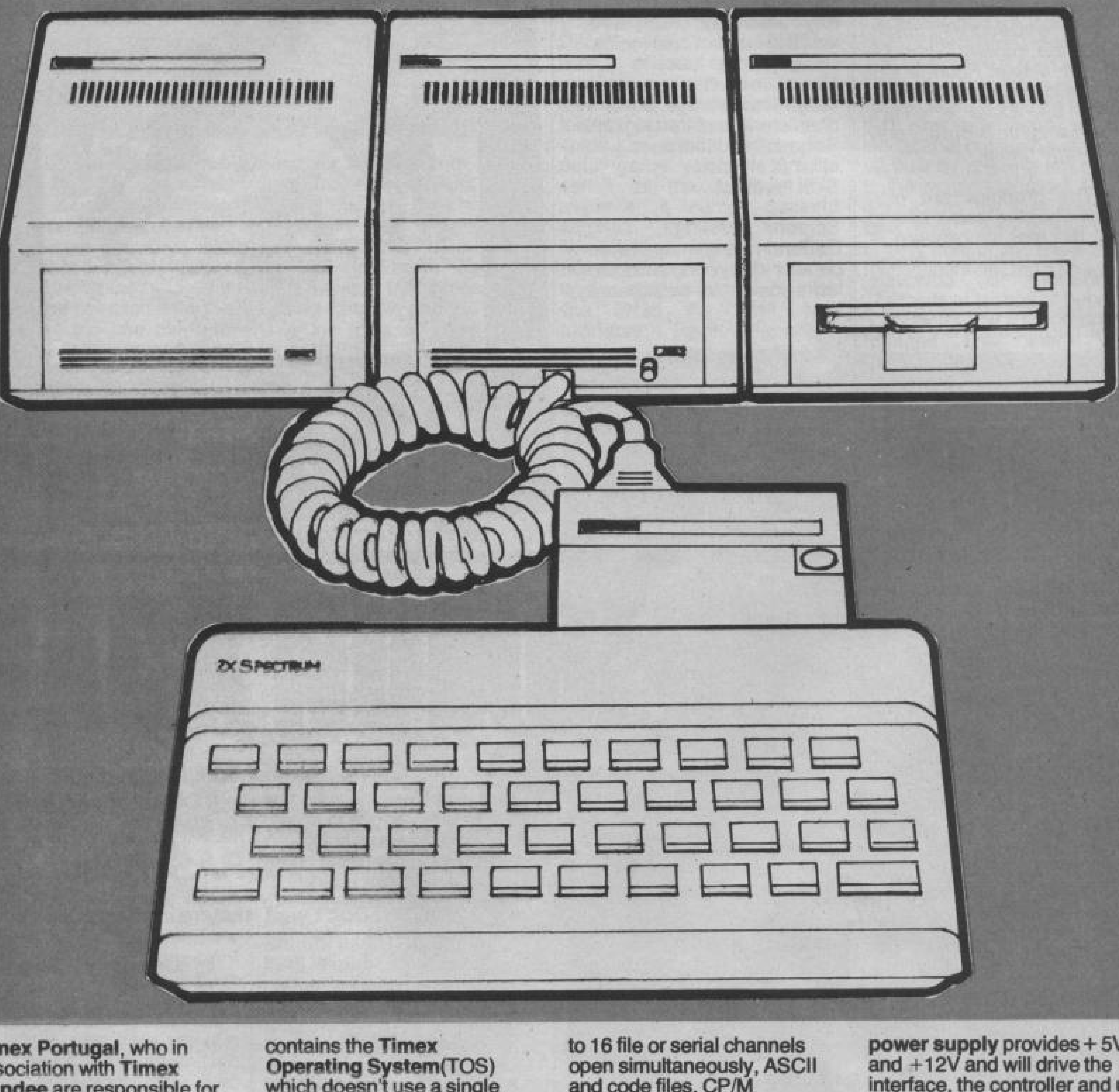
COMMENTS

Control keys: A/Z up/down, N/M left/right, SPACE bark/eat sugar
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek
Keyboard play: responsive, well laid out, but positioning Dougal can be fussy
Use of colour: reasonable
Graphics: average, but characteristic of the original
Sound: very little, poor attempt at tune
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: scrolling
General rating: may prove popular with young children, lacks content for older people.

Use of computer	58%
Graphics	57%
Playability	52%
Getting started	54%
Addictive qualities	38%
Value for money	45%
Overall	51%



DISC DRIVE UPGRADE FOR THE SPECTRUM



Timex Portugal, who in association with **Timex Dundee** are responsible for the mass production of the Spectrum, have developed a complete floppy disc system with communications facility for the Spectrum. This neat looking system is contained in four individual modules. Clipped into the back of the Spectrum is the **Interface**unit, which connects up via a spiral cable to the **Controller** unit. The controller is a complete Z80 system with its own 2K ROM and 16K RAM, and contains the **Timex Operating System**(TOS) which doesn't use a single byte of the standard Spectrum memory and is also not constrained by its size. The TOS is a patch into Sinclair Basic and all commands are issued to the controller by suffixing an * to the command. TOS supports tree like directories with named diskettes, named files (8 char. nameY 3 char. suffix) with protection and catalogue attributes, pathnames, wildcard file selection and up to 16 file or serial channels open simultaneously, ASCII and code files, CP/M compatible. It can control up to 4 discs (2 Mbytes max.). The controller has two serial communication ports with full software support for easy communication with any peripheral such as printer, plotter or other computer equipped with a standard RS232C serial port. The 3 inch disc drive can be a 40 or 80 track, single or doublesided version with a formatted capacity of up to 640K. The **power supply** provides + 5V and +12V and will drive the interface, the controller and up to two drives. The recommended retail price is £225 + VAT, but **Micromatic** is making a special offer of £199 +VAT for orders received until 30th December 1984. The unit will be distributed by most of the larger chain stores in the near future. **Micromatic** can be contacted at **84 Talbot Road, London N6 4RA, Tel: 01-340 0310.**

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THE TERMINAL MAN





STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©

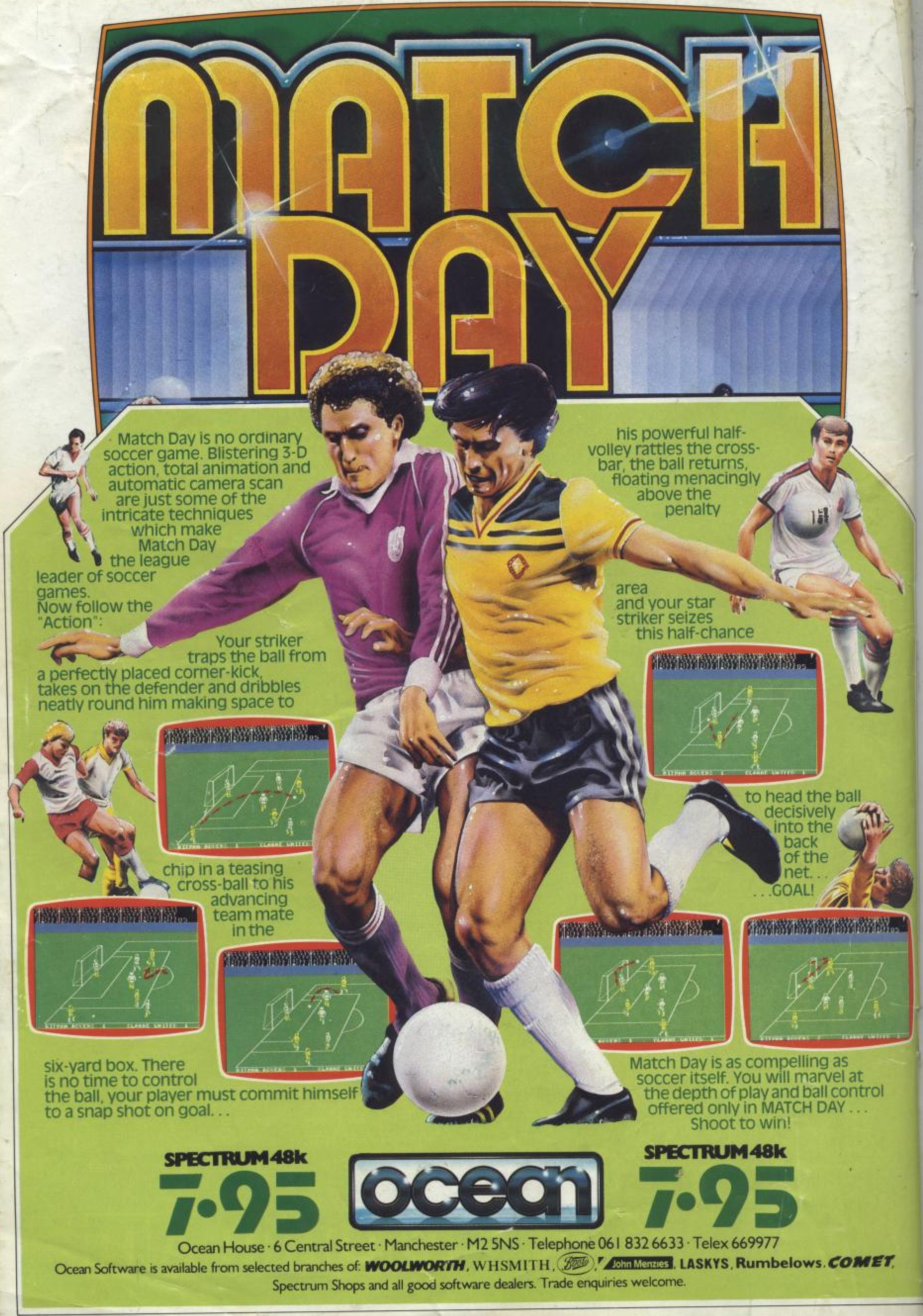

CROSS- WHERE'S CROSS! MANDRELL...!
HE'S DOING WHAT HE WAS PROGRAMMED FOR JIN - IT'S BACK TO EARTH FOR US,
URGED BY THE GIGANTIC POWER OF ITS ENGINES THE ANCIENT SHIP SHOOK HERSELF FREE...!
CROSS...
THE SILLY CLUTTER OF BITS AND PIECES THAT HAD BEEN BUILT ON TO HER CRUMBLED TO DUST -
SHE SPLIT THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLANET WITH THE NOISE OF A THOUSAND THUNDERSTORMS AND WAS GONE...


AND WHILE THE WICKED CITY OF KEBWOB WAS CONSUMED BY FIRE, CROSS WATCHED, —
—THE LITTLE BIT OF HUMAN LEFT IN HIM SAD...
BUT THE COMPUTER HAD DONE ITS JOB — ITS PASSENGERS WOULD GET HOME.
IT WAS TIME TO DO WHAT COMPUTERS NORMALLY DO WHEN THEY FINISH A JOB—
—CLOSE DOWN.
BUT CROSS WAS NOT ONLY COMPUTER—
THERE WAS THE VIRUS ELEMENT —
—IT WANTED LIFE...
THERE WAS THE HUMAN FRAGMENT — BEDROCK OF EMOTIONS —AND HOPES...
HOPES OF WHAT? A LIFE WITHOUT PURPOSE? NO LOGICAL TASK TO BE CARRIED OUT...
THE COMPUTER WON OUT— DECIDED...
IT RELAXED THE IMAGES THAT IT GENERATED TO FILL IN THE MISSING PARTS OF THE HUMAN'S BODY— IT CEASED MONITORING THE FUNCTIONS AND JUST STOPPED...
FUNNY... THOUGH... IT... FELT... H-A-P-P-Y...

The End



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